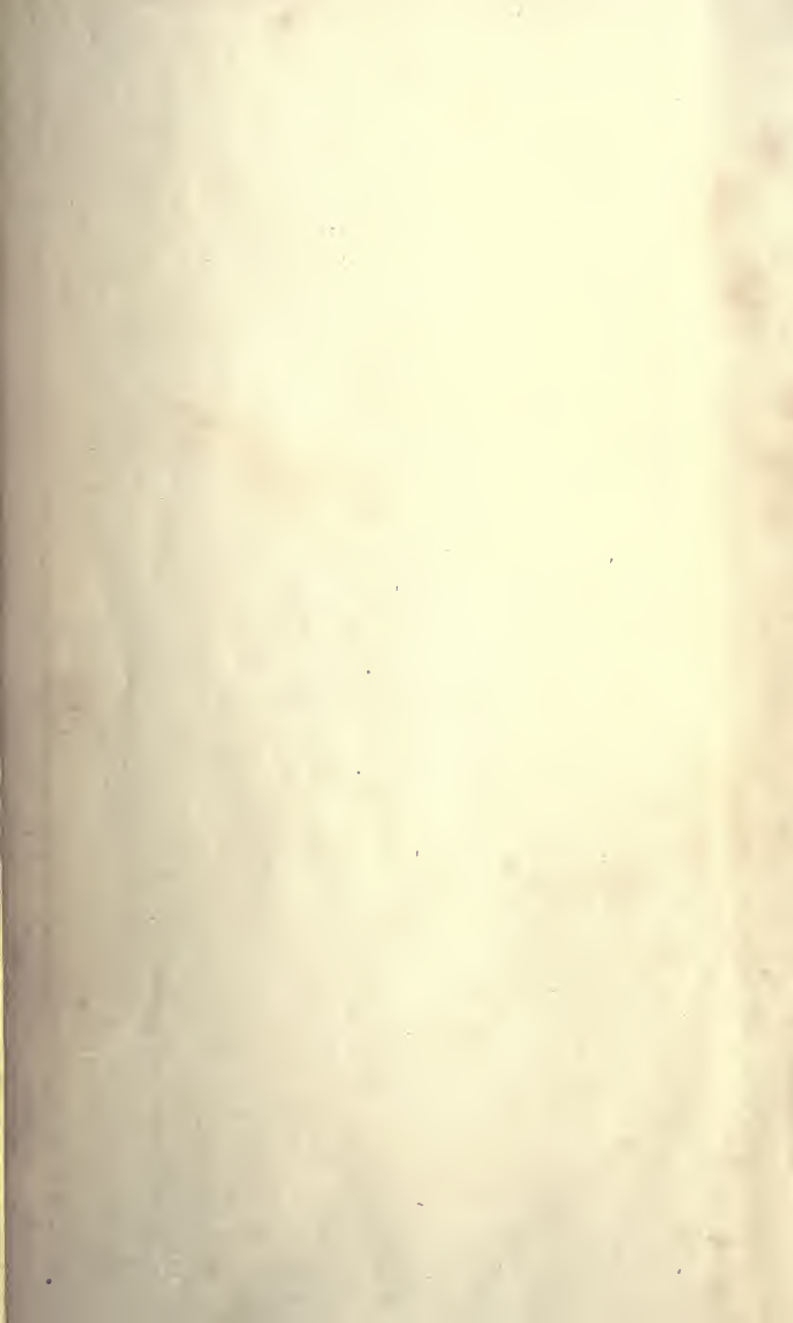






Presbytery





THE *J R*
D E
EXERCISE OF FAITH
IMPOSSIBLE

EXCEPT IN THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH.

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LONDON:
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172, FLEET STREET; 16, DAWSON STREET, DUBLIN; AND DERBY.

1846. */47*



PREFACE.

So much has been said of late upon the subject of Church authority, while at the same time such a very great variety of view and so much uncertainty upon the subject altogether prevails at the present time in England, that it is hoped that any attempt which is made to throw light upon the question, (whether it be in any degree successful or not,) will meet with indulgence at the hands of those for whom it is written; for it is written in the hope that it may serve as a step towards meeting that which is felt to be one of the great needs of the day, in that until the great question of authority is settled, it seems almost hopeless to enter into discussions upon matters of doctrine or of detail, nor can controversies be brought to a successful and lasting termination until men are agreed as to whom they are to refer them to for decision; and not only this, but, what is principally here considered, there is felt to be so intimate, I may say inseparable, a connection between the having true faith and the going by the proper authority, that it deserves our most attentive consideration what guide we are to follow. No Christian will allow, for instance, that any one who denies the truth of the Scriptures can be said to have true

faith, even though he may happen to hold much of the truth which is therein contained.

It is not a little remarkable that the question of Church authority should have existed for three hundred years, and be yet entirely unsettled; in fact, the confusion relating to it does but increase. I speak of it as an unsettled question, meaning thereby, not that it is one which really admits of doubt, but as being one to which those who called it in question have not themselves given any very decided or uniform answer; there is, in fact, every variety of opinion among them relating to it; some of them act almost upon the Catholic principle, others despise it altogether. All this shows that the principles of the Reformation are *but very little known*; men talk of acting upon them—but what are they? *Who*, among the Reformed at least, can tell what they are? That they are in some way connected with “private judgment” in distinction from the authority of the Church is plain enough; but with regard to the *extent* to which private judgment is allowable, the Reformed are by no means agreed; how far, for instance, they are bound to accept the conclusions of the Reformers, or to assent to articles drawn up by the private judgment of others; or how the accepting them at all is consistent with the right of private judgment, or whether private judgment may be exercised in determining what *is* Scripture, as well as what is *in* Scripture, &c. What, then, is the principle of the Reformation, and what is its character? Is it unmitigated evil, or is it pure good? Has it its good and its bad points? Did it go too far, or not far enough? Is it complete and final, or does it need developing? All these opinions have their adherents among members of the Reformed com-

munities. Some abuse the leaders of that great movement, and some praise them; but whatever they may think of them, whether well or ill, yet, somehow, surely the mention of their name seems to call up different feelings in the minds of all parties from what they would experience at the mention of the name of an Apostle and Prophet! Their admirers will not identify them with Apostles and Prophets on the one hand, nor will their opponents class them *entirely* with ordinary heretics on the other hand.* Nor are their followers agreed as to whether they have purified the faith sufficiently, or whether they have not gone too far. It is to assist in furnishing them with a rule or standard by which they may ascertain how far the Reformation has really affected the faith of those who follow it, that this paper is published.

An outline of it was drawn up before my conversion, but was not published at the time. Since then, parts have been added to it, and the whole has been developed into a greater size than that in which it was originally written.

It will be a cause of sincere gratification to me if it is in any way instrumental, though in ever so small a degree, in meeting the need which is felt by the religious community in which I was brought up, and with which I am still connected, by social though no longer by religious ties, and which still contains in it some who are especially dear to me and have treated me with the very greatest kindness. May peace be at length granted to it! though it is to be

* A very excellent distinction has been given by a member of the Church of England, which will be stated farther on.

feared that it will hardly find it until it has first experienced still greater confusion—a confusion whose sound seems to grow louder and louder as the deed of the Reformers becomes better known and understood.

Littlemore,

Feast of the Desponsation of B. M. V. 1846.

THE
EXERCISE OF FAITH,

ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.—THE CHANGE FROM PROTESTANTISM TO CATHOLICISM DOES NOT INVOLVE THE GIVING UP OF ANY PREVIOUSLY HELD FAITH.

SHORTLY after my own conversion, one of my friends said to me, “I think that your friends have a claim upon you to know why you have left us, and joined another body.” Indeed, it naturally occurs even to such as in consequence of having been led to look more closely than is commonly done into the real state of the case, have perceived how utterly groundless is the prejudice that has gone abroad about Roman Catholics; it is natural, I repeat, even for these, who are convinced of the absurdity of the cry so often raised against “Romish errors,” to ask, “Why were you not content to remain where you were? What can you gain by moving? Is there not already in the Established, as well as in the Catholic Church, all necessary truth

taught, and everything else that is necessary to salvation?" There certainly is reason in these questions; it is quite natural for any one who conceives himself to be in possession of full Gospel privileges, yet sees others behave towards him as if he were *not*, as in fact those do who leave his communion, to ask, "What is there wanting to me in my present position?" We need not be surprised, then, at being asked to explain our views; the real cause of surprise would rather be that so many should look with indifference upon the great religious movement that is going on, without desiring to inform themselves of its principles, or of the real doctrines of that body to which the movement is said to be tending.

Such a reasonable desire on the part of those whom we have left, ought by all means to be satisfied, as far as we are able to do it. I purpose, therefore, and I trust with God's assistance, to state one of the main things which appears to be wanting in bodies external to the Catholic Church, and which induced me to change my position.

Before entering, however, into this question, it may be as well, for the sake of any who may not have had the means of knowing the state of controversy between Catholics and Protestants, to state briefly *what it is* that I have done, and afterwards to give a reason for so doing.

When Protestants become Catholics, it is

frequently said of them, “What could have made them forsake the faith in which they were brought up?” This is certainly a reasonable question, and one which needs answering. Yet it seems to proceed upon a false supposition. Nothing can be more untrue than to say that we have forsaken any faith, for we have been far from doing anything of the kind. On the contrary, we hold all the main doctrines which we formerly held, and, I trust I may say, with greater firmness and upon more solid grounds than ever we did before. What we have done has rather been of an opposite kind. The name Protestant seems rather to imply a *rejection* of doctrines once current, than the adoption of any forgotten ones; so that, upon the whole, what a Protestant does when he ceases to be a Protestant, is *to cease to protest*, or, in other words, to begin to hold once more doctrines that had been departed from.

After having become Catholics, we still continue to hold that there is one God, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, through whom alone we have remission of sins, and hopes of heaven. We believe Him to be very God, and very man; that He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, that He died for us, and rose again, that He ascended into heaven, from whence He will come again at the last day to judge the world, and reward every man

according as his work shall be, and according to the faithfulness he has shown. This we held as Protestants, and continue to hold it as Catholics. We also continue to hold the true doctrine relating to the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the ever blessed Trinity, and believe that it is through the power and operation of the Holy Spirit that we can please God and become His children. That it is, in fact, the being partakers of God's Holy Spirit, and having been sealed with it, that makes the distinction between those who are more properly sons of God, and those who are not.* We also call the assembly of those who have been thus sealed and set apart by the Holy Spirit of God, by the name of "*the Church*;" and in this Church we say there are two grand classes of persons—those who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, and are under its guidance, and are sanctified by it, and are doing the will of God; and those who, on the other hand, after having been sealed by it, have quenched it, and thus, without repentance, will not ultimately profit by it, but rather the reverse. We do not deny that these belong to the assembly called the Church, so long as they frequent it, and partake of its ordinances; yet we teach them that it is nothing, or rather worse than nothing, to partake of its ordinances without living the

* See Newman's Lectures on Justification, ch. 6. and Petavius de Trin. Lib. 8. c. 5.

life that it requires. This life that is required consists in the practice of the ordinary virtues of justice, humility, purity, faith, charity, &c., continual repentance, confession of sins, with a trust that, for Christ's sake, they will be forgiven. We teach, moreover, that the merits of our Saviour, and the benefits of His death, are not appropriated equally by all men. Some there are, such as those who do not believe, or do not obey, who will have no benefit from them at all; in others there is every variety and degree in the amount of benefit that will be received; some, as unbelievers, receive no atonement at all; others are still worse off, if possible, even than this, and are *guilty* of the body and blood of our Lord; and that, generally, the degree in which our sins are pardoned depends upon the degree in which our Lord's merits and the benefits of His death are applied to the soul of the individual: for, although He died once for all men, yet there needs a particular application of His merits to the souls, one by one, of those who are saved by Him, which application takes place through certain *prescribed means*—such as faith, repentance, the sacraments, and other things; and that in proportion as these prescribed means are made use of in their fulness, so will the application of what we need be complete or incomplete, as the case may be. To some His saving merits may be applied only imperfectly, either from weakness

of faith or some other cause, and thus they may have to undergo some temporary punishment before the day of judgment, either in this life or after death, and perhaps also a permanent diminution of glory. And thus we hold that it is not through any deficiency of power or efficacy in the Saviour's merits that all men without exception do not profit by them to the utmost, but because all men do not thoroughly and completely apply them to themselves. Such is an outline of the Catholic doctrine of the atonement — a doctrine in which the more respectable Protestants mostly agree with us.

Catholics also teach the efficacy and necessity of prayer. We pray not only for our own selves, but for the human race. For we know that in God we live, and move, and have our being, and therefore we pray that He may make life happy, unless, indeed, we know for certain that any are beyond the reach of our prayers. The case of those, for instance, who have died in unbelief, is hopeless, and prayer for them is superfluous; those also, whose lives have been such that there is strong reason to believe that they have gone straight to glory and are with Christ, we do not pray for, from a feeling that we rather have need of their prayers than they of ours, and therefore, instead of praying for them, we endeavour to prevail with them to pray for us. For all others we pray without any exception. We do not pray for those whom we believe to be

strictly and properly dead ; but, then, we do not include among the dead all that some persons do : for we have heard that “ God is not a God of the dead, but of the living.” We pray for all whom we think are not dead without hopes of recovery.

We also believe that our Saviour has appointed the use of certain rites called sacraments, which are rites to which a certain *grace* belongs. All Protestants, with few exceptions, agree with us in attributing *some* use or efficacy to them, otherwise they would not use them. They may differ as to the precise number of these sacraments ; they may also differ from us, as they do among themselves, as to the efficacy or sacredness of them—all that we differ from them in is, that we attribute a greater sacredness to them than Protestants do. A great many Protestants acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins—so do we. They acknowledge the real presence of our blessed Lord in what is called the Lord’s Supper ; in which many of them teach that His body and blood are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful—so do we: we believe His presence to be as real as it was during His earthly ministry.

We use, in common with Protestants, a variety of terms which, it is true, are not found in Holy Scripture ; but yet we use them, as they do, to express doctrines which we hold to be in accordance with Scripture. We differ

as to the precise number of words so used, they not using quite so many as we do. We use such words as the following: Trinity, Transubstantiation, Incarnation, Sacrament, Catholic, and several others; most of which they use as well as ourselves.

We also receive all the Scriptures that they do, and a few other books besides, which they at the Reformation ceased to consider as authoritative; such as the books of the Apocrypha. Luther added to the number of rejected books the Epistle of St. James. Others have added that of St. Jude, &c.; but we hold all of these just as they were previous to the Reformation.

We also believe the sacraments above mentioned to be the means for preserving that unity which the creeds speak of as being one of the properties of the Church.

We teach, also, that the ten commandments are binding upon Christians, though not the ceremonial part of the Jewish law; also that it is necessary to be sparing in the use of the comforts and good things of the world, especially eating and drinking, for which certain broad rules are laid down for us to go by—that while a certain amount of abstinence in this respect is necessary for all, so in proportion as it is carried out, does a person advance in perfection, by denying himself worldly goods, and submitting to voluntary poverty, in order, among other reasons, that

those that are in necessity may have what they need; by living a life of chastity, and by submitting his own will to that of others in things lawful or indifferent, as the Rechabites did. This the Catholic Church holds out as a more perfect life than can be led by one who, although pious and holy, is engaged in secular affairs. And, besides this, the Church having the power of choosing those whom she thinks most proper for feeding Christ's flock, makes choice of those only who are willing to abstain from the occupations and engagements of matrimony, at least in countries where she can find such men, and this, among other reasons, in order that men may not be tempted to enter into the sacred calling in order to make a better provision for a wife and family than they could make otherwise. We also believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting which follows.

So much is said by way of a brief description of the doctrine and mode of life proposed by the Catholic Church. If there be any who desire a fuller account, I may refer them to such works as Milner's *End of Religious Controversy*, Hay's *Sincere Christian*, Rodriguez's *Christian Perfection*, Mannoek's *Poor Man's Catechism*, or to Dr. Wiseman's *Lectures*, or Challoner's *Catholic Christian Instructed*, or to Moehler's *Symbolism*, or to Bellarmine's *Disputations*, or the *Summa Theologiæ* of St. Thomas Aquinas, or, what is

still better, they might go and hear Catholic sermons;* by any of these means a Protestant may gain some idea of what the system is which our priests would have us to follow. If we do not all go by their instructions, that is no fault of the instructions themselves. Where the Catholic system can be seen in full, in living

* Segneri, indeed, attributes something almost sacramental to a word spoken. In almost all conversions that take place, however much those who are converted may have been prepared for conversion by study, &c., the finishing stroke, the event that has been the immediate cause of their conversion, has been personal intercourse with some one, either privately, or by hearing his public discourses. Surely, in the midst of all the misrepresentation that has gone abroad as to Catholic teaching—such as, that the real religion of Roman Catholics is not that which is found in their books—the best and surest way of finding what is popularly taught, is to go and hear their actual preaching. Speaking of preaching, Segneri says: “This is the ordinary way which God has appointed for the salvation of His elect, namely—that they should hear the preaching of the truth. ‘Hear,’ says He to them by Isaiah, ‘hear and your soul shall live’—*audite et vivet anima vestra*. (lv. 3.) He might save them (who doubts it?) by other means: by means of celestial apparitions, by means of inspiration, by means of illumination, by means of sacred reading. But it has not been His will that this should be the ordinary way; perhaps because, as St. Bernard has observed, He would have life to enter into the world by the same channel that death did. Death entered by ears opened to hear a false preacher, such as was the serpent in the earthly paradise; and by ears opened to hear true preachers, it is necessary that life should enter—*Auris prima mortis janua, prima aperiatur et vitæ*. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, saw with his own eyes the fall of the lofty tree that represented himself; he saw all its fruit wither, he saw all its flowers fade, he saw all its leaves dry up, he saw all the beasts and all the birds fly from it in one hour, which had hitherto, in such great numbers, either reposed in its shade, or sported in its boughs. But what? did such a sight suffice to move him by itself? No. It was necessary that he should hear over and above this the living voice of a man such as Daniel.

operation, it is far more striking than any description of it on paper.

From the short account I have given, I hope it will be evident that in receiving Catholicism we have not parted with *much* that we held before. In fact, this is just the difference between changing from Protestantism to Catholicism, and vice versa. The former change consists mainly in the reception of what was not held before, while the other consists in the *rejection* of some previously held doctrine. A person on becoming a Protestant gives up points both of doctrine and practice. He gives up the practice of confession, he ceases to fast, and altogether takes upon himself an easier religion than that which he professed before. By becoming Ca-

David, notwithstanding his docility of heart, could not be moved to compunction for the death of Uriah, an incomparable soldier, until he heard the living voice of a Nathan, who reprovèd him for it. Josaphat, although so scrupulous in mind, could not be moved to a detestation of the league which he had made with Achab, the unbelieving prince, until the living voice of a Jehu reprovèd him for it. And so, if we were to range beyond the sacred writings, you will see that, out of a hundred notable conversions, which have happened in the world, ninety-nine of them happened through the power of divine preaching, if, indeed, that of St. Augustine does not make us believe it of the *whole* of them. This illustrious doctor, neither his admirable talents were sufficient to bring him back to God, nor the vast reading, nor the indefatigable studies, nor the insatiable ardour with which he used to search out the truth, but it was necessary that he should hang, as a stripling would, upon the words of St. Ambrose. Preaching is necessary—preaching. Something that you will hear on such a day, and in such a place, and from such a tongue, is destined to be that which shall strike your heart.”—Quaresimale Predic. p. 78.

tholics, however, we return to what is acknowledged to have been the doctrinal system previous to the Reformation, and take up again what was then rejected.

I hope from this statement, together with what follows, that it will appear that so far from a person *giving up* any faith by changing from Protestantism to Catholicism, he will have, on the contrary, if he makes the change in a proper spirit, *acquired* faith, in a manner in which he had it not before.

I proceed, then, to the examination of the question mentioned above.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE NECESSITY OF HAVING FAITH — THE MEANING OF THE WORD, AND ITS DISTINCTION FROM OTHER THINGS WHICH RESEMBLE IT.

ALL Protestant bodies, as well as Catholics, are agreed as to the very high importance of *having faith* in order to our salvation. Both parties agree in teaching with the holy Scriptures, "That without faith it is impossible to please God;" that the Christian "lives by faith;" that we are "justified by faith." There is also another word of nearly the same

import with faith, which is very much used in the English translation of the Scriptures—the word *believe*.* We have it said, “only believe,”—“he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” And again, it is said that our Lord could not do many miracles in a certain city, “because of their *unbelief*.” These, and a very great number of other passages, attach a great blessing to belief, or faith, while others speak of the great loss sustained by those who have it not.

There is another great point upon which Catholics and Protestants are agreed—they not only acknowledge the general necessity of having faith, but also of believing certain particular doctrines. Indeed, if it were otherwise, the whole of the Scriptural exhortation would be unmeaning. To tell a person to *believe*, of course implies that there are certain particular doctrines or dogmatic statements which are necessary to be believed—such, for instance, as those contained in the Apostles’ Creed. There is then, so far, no difference between ourselves and the majority of Protestants as to the necessity of having faith or of believing certain dogmatic statements—the only difference is, *what*

* In the original, however, there is but one word to signify both, *πίστις*, which may be translated either by the word “belief,” or “faith.” There may, nevertheless, be some shade of distinction between the words “faith” and “belief.”

these statements are. Upon this point Protestants are not agreed among themselves; nor do they agree with us. Accordingly, the usual mode of conducting the controversy is to argue upon matters of detail; to discuss, one by one, the various points of difference which exist, or are supposed to exist, between the two bodies.

I purpose, however, on the present occasion, to depart somewhat from the usual method observed, that of entering into each question in detail. I would rather endeavour at present to state principles than particular doctrines; and therefore propose, instead of discussing particular articles of faith, to enquire into the nature of faith generally; and thus, when we see its nature, we shall be better able to ascertain which of the various communities can be said to have true justifying Faith.

In addition to the words "belief" and "faith," there is also another which has something of the same import, and is in common use, especially in Protestant communities, I mean the word "*opinion*." We frequently hear phrases such as "a man's religious opinions," of men holding "different opinions" in religion, of each being allowed to hold "his own opinion," of men not being answerable for their "religious opinions." These and a great many others of the kind, are in constant use; so prevalent, indeed, has the word become in Protestant bodies, as almost to supersede the use of

the others. What can be the meaning of this? How does it happen that we hear so little of their belief, and so much of their opinions? There must certainly be some meaning in the prevalent introduction of the word; it must have been introduced as being more expressive of their feelings and ideas than the words in common use before. There is, it is true, in many respects, a great similarity between belief and opinion, yet many considerations will teach us that they are not exactly the same. The very fact of there being the two words in use, would seem to imply this; for probably no two words in a language express *exactly* the same idea; there must be at least some shade of difference of meaning between any two words, however similar in signification. This, I would maintain, is the case with regard to the words we are considering; namely, belief, faith, opinion; between which, though they certainly have much in common, I would still maintain that there *is* a difference in meaning, and an important one. It shall be my endeavour to state it.

Let me however, beforehand, express a hope that any one who reads these pages will not think that, from what has been said, the present is a mere controversy of words. What follows, I hope, will prove that it is not. The use of investigating the meaning of words is that we may be able better to see the nature of the things represented by them. Words are the vehicles

by which we convey thoughts and ideas from one person to another. One of the great needs of the present time would seem to be that of a more accurate phraseology; of more definite modes of expressing ourselves; a need, however, which we may hope will be supplied, in proportion as we begin more earnestly to act upon our principles. It is the opinion of one who for many years has thought deeply upon the present state of affairs, that, "half the controversies in the world are verbal ones; and could they be brought to a plain issue, they would be brought to a prompt termination. Parties engaged in them would perceive, either that in substance they agreed together, or that their difference was one of first principles. This is the great object to be aimed at in the present age, though confessedly a very arduous one. We need not dispute, we need not prove—we need but define.When men understand what each other mean, they see, for the most part, that controversy is either superfluous or hopeless."—*Newman, Univer. Sermons, p. 192.*

Belief, doubtless, has much in common with opinion; just as it has also with knowledge; yet there is a difference between belief and knowledge, and so there is between belief and opinion. We are not said to *believe* a thing, properly speaking, when we *know* it. We are not said, for instance, to believe a thing which we see; or a mathematical proposition which has

been *proved* to us; this is properly *science*. Belief and opinion have this much in common with each other; that their subject matter does not immediately fall under the cognizance of the senses. We cannot be said to think a thing, or to believe it, when we see it. We believe those things which we assent to, without seeing them. Belief is an assent of the mind to what we do not see, and so (if we use the word "assent" in a large signification) is opinion also. What, then, is the difference between them? It seems to consist *in that upon which the assent is founded*. Belief, then, may be defined to be "an assent upon *testimony* or *authority*." If the conclusion was come to *without* being built on testimony or authority, the assent of the mind is opinion, or science, as the case may be:—science, if it rests upon demonstration; opinion, if upon probability or conjecture. We are said to believe a thing when we assent to it *upon the word of another*, whereas it is only opinion when we come to the conclusion independently of what has been told us. For instance, if we were to judge of a man's character or qualifications from his appearance, it would be opinion: or of the course which political events were likely to take, or what the weather is likely to be; or when we judge by means of signs and tokens, of the probability of a thing happening when it admits of being otherwise. Whereas, if any one were to

tell us of an event having happened, and we were to assent to it *upon his* word, our assent would be belief; not so however if his *testimony* were wanting.

Such is the account generally given of belief; and it is evidently a consideration of high importance. How indispensably necessary is it for us to be rightly informed upon matters that relate to eternity, to have some means of information beyond mere conjecture, to determine our behaviour and guide us during the time of trial which is to decide our fate for ever. And what else have we for this purpose, but belief? What can we know of the world invisible, but by what is told us? We might form conjectures about it, yet still they would be mere conjectures; they would not be faith. We could not know that there would be rewards and punishments hereafter, unless He who will dispense them had been pleased to inform us of it. We might indeed *guess* that there would be, but still it would be only a guess, and would probably have but little influence upon our lives. Nor indeed could we have any thing more than a mere opinion, however probable a one, about the very existence of a world unseen; had not the beings in it spoken to us, and told us of it; but having received it upon their word, it is belief.

Let me not, however, be supposed to deny that right opinions produce their fruits, for they

undoubtedly do ; people very frequently act very strongly upon mere opinion. Yet still, however, I would maintain that there is an essential difference between belief and opinion ; as I hope will be clear from illustrations that will be made afterwards. Opinions may produce good results upon our lives ; yet we are not justified by opinions, we are justified by faith. And here perhaps it may not be out of place to say a few words upon the difference between belief and faith ; for they too, generally, though not necessarily, have a difference. It seems to be this ; that when we have *a personal interest* in the thing which we believe, it is faith. We should not call it a matter of faith that Julius Cæsar lived, for we have no personal concern in it ; yet being told that it was so, I believe it. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. The hope implies a personal interest, and assent without hope or expectation could hardly be called faith, though it might be called belief. Hence we see that in religious matters, faith and belief have a strong tendency to coincide.

The peculiarity, then, which distinguishes belief from opinion, or knowledge, or mental assent of any kind, is, *that it rests upon testimony* ;—upon the word of others. This element may be called its *differentia*, or distinguishing mark by which it differs from other things ; it is that element which is necessary to constitute assent belief, and without which it will be something

else, such as opinion, or something of the kind. This is its primary difference, its characteristic mark.

There is a difference, then, between true belief and right opinions. There is also no less a difference between belief and right *feelings*. That many right feelings belong to the human race, and perhaps independently of testimony, I by no means deny, but would rather maintain. There is, I am quite convinced, planted in the human breast, independently of all testimony, a deep-seated longing for something better than is to be had on earth, a continual reaching forward of the heart to something which is not attainable here, a feeling, vague though it may sometimes be, that there is a hereafter; that what we shall be there, will depend upon what we have been here. There is something in the human breast which will not be silenced, which destroys the peace of the sinner, and gives hope to the just; there is a kind of pleasurable feeling which succeeds a just action, even when it seems to have passed away, and which seems to tell us that it is good for us that we have done it, even if it has been at present cost to us; and on the other hand the review of a past sinful life, a life of injustice and wrong, cannot give satisfaction even to the most hardened unbeliever. The worst man that ever lived probably wishes that his life had been better, and this is nothing else than an undefined

fear of a hereafter in which he will meet with his recompense.

Still, however strong may be the natural feelings of the truth of certain of the principal doctrines of religion, we cannot call these feelings either faith or belief, unless in addition to them we have authority or testimony to assure us of the reality of what we look for. The distinction here attempted to be drawn between belief based upon authority on the one hand, and our natural feelings on the other, may be more clear from the following illustrations and considerations.

1. Suppose that an infant were exposed on a solitary island immediately after its birth, of which we have instances, and were by any means to grow up to manhood, and then were to be discovered by the crew of a ship and brought home, such a one, being a human being, would, of course, as he grew up in the solitary island, experience more or less acutely, all the desires and feelings that belong to the human race. He would feel a kind of longing for others like himself, unconsciously perhaps, yet still he would feel a sort of vacuum caused by the absence of the society of others; he might even have a feeling that this state of things would not be always; yet could we say that he *believed* that he should ever reach a country with other beings in it like himself? Certainly not. Whatever might be his feelings

or desires, or expectations, however strong they might be, we surely could not say that he believed that there existed objects to satisfy them. Just the same it is in the case of our own feelings with regard to the country which we hope to attain to: they may be natural to us, and independent of any express revelation; yet without revelation they are no more belief than they would be in the case of the savage on the lone island.

2. Again, there is undeniably in all men, a feeling of responsibility which they never get rid of, however much they may strive to do so. The greatest sinners feel it more or less, in common with every one else; even those who openly deny their belief in a future state. The feeling of responsibility then is a very different thing from *belief* in responsibility. For the feeling is always found, even while men deny their belief; if the feeling were the same as belief, all men would be believers; whereas it is well known that they are not. On the contrary, belief is mentioned in Scripture as being a virtue, and an excellence belonging to some, not to all.

In no case is that real belief which does not rest upon testimony—it may in many cases bear a close resemblance to it—correct opinions may produce their fruits—but it is to faith that *justification* is promised; and the Scripture says expressly of faith, that it “cometh by hearing.”

It rests upon external teaching, as opposed to the internal workings of the mind. These latter, however, are often mistaken among Protestants for faith; they are *not* faith, however, even when true; they may lead to it, still they are but the step to it, not the thing itself. There are very few, however, who, whatever they may say of their feelings, yet look upon them as something complete and sufficient of themselves, independently of external authority; they may not be agreed as to *what* authority they ought to follow, yet surely all recognize the existence of some authority; which is but in other words to say that authority is essential to true faith.

The very idea of faith, then, implies a *rule of faith*. All persons acknowledge the necessity of a *rule* of faith. And it appears from the considerations entered into above, that this rule is necessary, not merely to inform us what truths we are to receive, but to *constitute* them belief *when* so received. Even if our opinions were correct otherwise, they would not be belief, unless they depended upon this *rule*. There is then, it would appear, a kind of efficacy about the true rule of faith, an efficacy which belongs to it, and is peculiar to it, namely, the power of constituting what would otherwise be only an opinion, into belief. The *source* from which the doctrines which we hold, are derived, is, to speak in scholastic language, the "forma," or "form" of belief, i. e. that which forms or constitutes

belief; it is the form as opposed to the "material," i. e. the things believed. Here, then, we may see more clearly the difference between the three; opinion, belief, faith. Opinion is to belief, as the mere material is to the same material with form. It is possible then, and is very frequently the case, that the material may be nearly perfect, and may want but the form and but little more, to make it true belief; the tenets which a man holds may be true, and be nearly the whole of what he ought to hold; the form alone is wanting to him; which, when he can receive, he will be a believer.

The difference also between belief and faith, is of a similar nature with that between opinion and belief. Belief is to faith as the material is to the material and form, except in this case the form is different; the *form* in this latter case, as nearly all theologians tell us, is charity. This is what *forms* or constitutes a true justifying faith, it is "fides formata charitate," to which acceptance is promised at the last day; the devils believe and tremble, yet they have not justifying faith.

This kind of faith is the only one which we need consider the nature of; it is the only one which will profit us; the only one which deserves the name of faith; hence, in speaking of faith, it will be understood that I always mean justifying faith, as the Scriptures do.

All Catholic teachers, as well as the more

reasonable Protestant doctors, such as Bull and others, agree in teaching that only that faith justifies which is formed by love. That this is so, would seem evident from this one consideration among others: whatever depth men may attribute to the word justification, whether they hold that it is merely the treating us as righteous when we are not so in reality, or whether they say that it is the actual impartation of righteousness, or whatever else they may teach about it, yet in this much at least they all agree, namely, that it is the removal of the curse or anathema under which we have lain by reason of sin, original and actual. But the Scripture says, "if any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema." So that the anathema under which all men are born, is not removed until they love the Lord Jesus. That is to say, the love of the Lord Jesus is a necessary ingredient of that faith in Him which justifies; it is necessary in order to form a justifying faith. Calvin, indeed, as well as some other Protestants, say, that it is a *frigid fiction* to say that love is necessary in order to form a justifying faith; yet surely no man was ever justified by any other faith than that which is so formed. One would rather have thought that to assert that any other kind of faith short of this, was sufficient, as Calvin did, was the frigid fiction, the fiction of a frigid heretic. Justifying faith, then, is not merely an assent of the intellect to certain truths

proposed to us, but is also attended by an inclination of the affections towards the object of faith; and so it is said, "with *the heart* man believeth unto righteousness." The intellect assents to truths proposed to it, and in its turn proposes them to the heart for its acceptance or rejection, just as the external teacher proposed them to the intellect. The heart then is as it were the ultimate receptacle of them; it is that which, so to speak, *digests* them, and forms them into justifying faith.

The scriptural account of faith then is this: that its subject-matter is that which is unseen; that it is the evidence or considering these unseen things as evident, and hoping for them. That its primary source is God; that it comes to us by hearing; and that its ultimate seat is the heart.

This leads to the consideration of another point much insisted on by Catholics, namely, that faith is an especial gift of God. *Mere belief*, of course, need not be an especial gift; we may believe a man's word, when the doing so involves no change of affections, without any especial gift; not so, however, when the believing him includes all that justifying faith does. It may in two ways be said to be the gift of God. First, because it is He who makes the revelation which is proposed to us; and secondly, because it is He also who gives us the heart to accept it as we ought. A very clear

and excellent definition of faith is given by St. Alphonsus Liguori in these words: "Faith is a theological virtue, infused into us by God, and inclining us to yield a firm assent, by reason of the divine veracity, to every thing which God has revealed, and has proposed to us, by means of his Church, for our belief." This definition comprehends in it all the points which have been treated of above. He goes on to say, "It is said to be, 1. A *theological* virtue, that is, a virtue which has respect to God; for faith, just as hope and charity, have *direct* reference to God; whereas what are called the *moral* virtues have only an indirect reference to Him. 2. Infused into us by God; for faith is a divine and supernatural gift. 3. Inclining us to believe firmly; for the assent of Faith is incompatible with misgivings [formidine]. 4. On account of the divine veracity; for the Infallible Truth, which is God Himself, is the object of faith. 5. To all which God has revealed; for all which God has revealed, is the *material* object of faith. 6. And has proposed to us by His Church; for divine revelation is not made to us otherwise than through the Church, which sets before us the revelations which God has made." (vol. i. p. 173.)

Such are some of the principal ideas which are involved in the notion of Faith; all of which, however, are perhaps included in a still more

concise definition, which may be thus stated: Faith is subjection to revelation.

“ Before attempting to make application of the doctrine contained in the preceding pages to the existing state of things, in order to determine what party or parties of men may be truly said to have faith, it is necessary to speak briefly of the relationship which subsists between a man’s faith and his conscience ; this will be the object of the following chapter.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE RELATION BETWEEN FAITH AND CONSCIENCE.

To see the nature of this relationship we must consider the Catholic doctrine relating to the nature of conscience. Catholics do not teach that conscience is a separate power or faculty of the soul, such as the understanding or the will ; nor do they teach that it is properly speaking, the voice of God Himself speaking within us ; for this would be to say, that conscience is nothing in reality belonging to man’s nature, that it is another person within him, rather than something of his own. They teach, then, that it is neither a separate power of the soul, nor yet the indwelling Presence of a Power or Voice

which is not our own—but that it is an *act*, and an act of the reason. “Conscience,” says St. Thomas Aquinas, “properly speaking, is not a power but an act, and this is evident partly from the nature of the name, and partly from the phrases in common use respecting it; for conscience, according to the etymology of the word, implies the order of knowledge towards something. But this application of knowledge takes place by an act, whence it appears from the nature of the name that conscience is an act.” 1 qu. 77, art. 33. St. Alphonsus also describes it as being the “Practical judgment or dictate (dictamen) of the *reason*, by which we decide as occasions present themselves what is to be done as good, or avoided as evil.” So that, instead of being any indwelling presence which is not part of a man, or any power of the soul different from the understanding, and higher than it, it is described as being an act of *the intellect*, or rather of the reason—the reason being not a power different from the intellect, but rather a modification of it, or, rather still, the understanding viewed under a different aspect and under different circumstances. The intellect is that by which we apprehend first principles; the reason is that by which we deduce other truths from them. See St. Thomas, 1 lib. qu. 79, art. 8. Conscience, then, is nothing more or less than the practical judgment of the reason as to what actions are to be done, or what left

undone, or between what is good, and what is bad.

From this it would seem scarcely correct to speak, as is sometimes done, of the necessity of the reason or intellect being in slavery to the conscience, because conscience is properly an act of the reason or intellect, not a power distinct from it and above it, as the notion of its holding the reason in subjection would seem to imply.

To describe conscience, however, as *merely* an act of the reason would be to fall short of the truth; for we might, according to the description of it given above, say that it is the *approving* or *disapproving* the things that come under its cognizance. Now, the idea of approving a thing involves the idea of *some exercise of the affections*, and in this it has something that is common with faith; yet they differ in this among other things—in that faith is properly a *habit*, while conscience is an act, an act resulting from some habitus. The difference, however, to which I would direct attention, consists in that the one depends upon authority, while the other does not. A man has a conscience before he receives any religious truth from without, or recognizes any kind of external authority. He still has a conscience after he has rejected authority; but when he rejects authority, he gives up faith.

It is not enough, then, for a person to say

that he acts according to his conscience, for his conscience needs guidance. Reason must be submitted to Authority, or its acts will not be acts of faith. A popular description of conscience may be this: "Conscience is the way of acting which seems right to the individual according to the best of his judgment," for the acting according to the conscience is the same as acting according to what seems to us to be right. If we act otherwise, we are not acting according to conscience; and, again, when a man acts according to the best of his judgment, and not according to passion, we say that he acts according to his conscience, or according to the way which seems right unto him.

The conscience, then, itself needs guidance; for it is not of itself infallible. We have, it is true, a faculty to enable us to do right, just as brutes have instincts which prompt them spontaneously to avoid what is injurious. Yet even these sometimes fail. They may secure an animal in ninety nine dangers, and yet fail in the hundredth. How is it that a moth has such a tendency to burn itself in a candle? Just in like manner, however powerful may be the faculty we have for deciding what is good for us and what is bad, yet if we neglect to have it properly informed, there will be sure to be some one snare that we shall fall into; "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of death;" and however correct our gene-

ral moral feelings, there will be sure to be *something* in which our moral sense will fail us. Conscience, therefore, needs some external guide, or we might, even if we were under like circumstances, be no better than those who really thought they were doing God service when they killed His saints.

CHAPTER IV.

VARIETY OF PARTIES IN THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH—APPLICATION OF THE PRECEDING DEFINITIONS TO THE QUESTION, WHICH OF ALL THESE PARTIES HAS TRUE FAITH.

It cannot, I am sure, be otherwise than a matter of very deep concern to any thinking and religious Protestant, to see the very great variety of opinion that prevails in England at this moment; the differences which prevail, not only between Catholics and Protestants, but among Protestants themselves. And this especially must be the case with English Churchmen. Perhaps there is scarcely a religious community in the world in which so much difference exists; every other community has some characteristic line of teaching, some distinguishing spirit or policy, or mode of acting, or way of thinking; some "one mind," which seems to pervade the whole. All

persons recognize this as strongly existing in the Catholic Church ; they may hate or they may love the spirit which moves it, they may call it by the name of Popery, or they may call it Catholicism, yet they do not deny its existence ; the same may be said of sects, such as Independents, Baptists, &c. Each sect has some common sympathy pervading all its members ; all its members agree in the general line of doctrine which they follow ; they all agree as to what other bodies to sympathize with, and what to avoid. In short, greatly as two sects may differ from each other, still the individual members of each one have all the same general principles. Yet who can say that any such thing takes place in the Established Church ? One party fraternizes with dissenters, another with Catholics, a third holds itself aloof from all, and shuts itself up in itself, claiming an apostolic purity which it denies to all others, priding itself upon being free not only from the errors, but from what they call the enthusiasm which may be seen on both sides of it.

This state of things, however, is deservedly lamented by the more thinking and serious among them, and is seen by almost all to be a state that cannot possibly go on much longer without some great and thorough change ; some are crying for a second reformation, others for more definite statement of doctrine ; while others feel a deep desire to return once more

to the home which their forefathers have deserted.

Speaking of the great divisions of opinion which subsist in the English Church, a writer in the *British Critic* remarks, that "it is a matter of active question at the present time within our Church, whether or not a Judgment impends over each one of us, strictly and literally according to our works; whether the good works of a Christian be 'filthy rags,' or endued with a quality of inherent righteousness; whether the sins of ordinary life be forgiven with greater facility under the Gospel than under other forms of religion, or whether the increased facility of such forgiveness, be the principal good tidings which the Gospel has brought; whether personal assurance of salvation be in ordinary cases a divine promise or a diabolical illusion; whether private study of scripture, with careful abstinence from reference to other authority, be the means by which it is promised that the Spirit shall lead us to the truth, or by which it is to be feared, (if we have the opportunity of knowing better,) that the devil will lead us *from* the truth; whether the Church be or be not an appointed medium between the soul and God; whether the type of Antichrist is to be principally looked for among foreign Protestants or Catholics, and other similar matters." No. 65. p. 227. This passage depicts most strikingly the state of things in the Anglican establish-

ment—is it a state that any man who has the least religious feeling, can be satisfied with? and if not, where is his remedy?

It must occur to them to ask, which of all these conflicting parties has true faith; for it is a contradiction to say that all have it, though each party may, in a certain sense, claim it; what has one class of them to say for itself, which the opposite class has not? Each of them will say, I have true faith, faith built upon the highest authority, the authority of the Scriptures. If a person has not something more to say than that he goes by Scripture, what has he to say for himself which another has not? To say that he is more clever or more holy, is but the wretched refuge of a thorough Protestant. It is true that *now* many of them can give a better account of what they hold, but nine years ago, one who no longer belongs to them, but was then one of the highest authorities among them, thus describes the state of things: “All Protestant sects of the present day, may be said to agree with us and differ from the Romanists, in considering the Bible as the only standard of appeal in doctrinal enquiries.” This, however, is not the case now.

This extreme variety of opinion among them, makes it a matter of some difficulty in speaking of the defects in the Anglican Church, to use such language as shall comprehend the whole of it; for where there are so many parties among

them, language which is applicable to one party may not be so to another ; and thus if anything is urged against them, those who feel the force of it may shelter themselves under the idea that what is said is not applicable to them as a Church, but only to parties or individuals in it. Therefore, before I attempt to make any further general observations upon the Established Church as a whole, it may be well to say something of the various parties in it individually. The question to be decided with regard to them is, it must be remembered, " Which of them can, according to the description of faith given in the preceding chapters, be said to have faith."

Let us begin then, with the case of such Protestants as assert that they build what they hold upon their own private interpretation of Scripture, and who profess not to hold anything unless it is proved to them from holy writ. I do not at all know how far this party prevails, but I suppose there are very few indeed who really belong to it. The great majority of Protestants have gone through no such process of private judgment, but have received all or nearly all that they hold, before they had read a single chapter. The way in which they originally learn truth, is *from the word of their parents and teachers* ; they accept what is told them long *before* they have examined for themselves ; nothing then can possibly be more unreal or

senseless, than to speak of not believing a thing until you have proved it for yourselves, for every one receives a great deal before he proves anything.

To return, however, to the case proposed: that of a person who builds what he holds upon private interpretation of Scripture—such a one will say that his tenets are real belief, because he holds them upon the Authority of the Bible; and that they are as really belief as the doctrines held by Catholics, who recognize the authority of the Church. And indeed, at first sight, there seems a great deal of reason in what he says: his assertion appears quite logical—nevertheless, there is a difficulty about it which I purpose to consider. In the first place, then, a person cannot be said to hold a thing upon the authority of another, unless this other person has really told it to him; so that clearly in these points in which a person understands the scriptures *wrongly*, it is evident that he cannot really hold such things upon their authority, for they do not teach it. A very grave objection will here occur. It may be said, “May not a person *mistake* a command, and yet, since he acts upon it, have faith?” This will, in a measure, depend upon the circumstances under which the mistake arose. If there is any culpable negligence on his part, of course we should say that he had not faith. Nor, indeed, could we in any strict sense say that he had faith, even when no such negligence is to

be imputed to him; we should rather, in such a case, say that he had a *faithful disposition*, though not faith itself. For in "faith" there are two things to be considered. "Faith is," as St. Thomas observes, "the perfection of the *understanding*," that is, the furnishing it with those things without which it would be imperfect. This perfection of the understanding, is, when faith is real and justifying, that is, when it is formed by charity accompanied by a perfection of the *will* also. Hence, we have the two things, a perfection of the will, and a perfection of the understanding. Now, where a person *mistakes* a command, the perfection of his understanding is wanting; so that though he may have *one* of the two perfections above-mentioned, as long as he is without the other he cannot have true faith.

Moreover, as faith is a *gift of God*, it is evident that any thing erroneous cannot be a special gift of God, and therefore cannot be Christian Faith. "Fidei non potest subesse falsum." St. Thomas, sec. qu. 1. art. 3.

Such parts, then, of the system which a person draws by private judgment from the Scriptures *as are wrong*, may be set aside at once as not being belief at all, but mere opinions. The only case really deserving consideration, is that part of his system in which he happens to be right; it might seem that such parts at least are real belief, whatever the others may be.

Now it has always been held by Catholics, and I may add, by most others also, that any one who rejects any one article of faith, has no faith at all; that even those points in which he happens to be right, cannot properly be called faith. If then a person upon studying the Scripture, were to deduce from it nine out of ten truths which it contained, but were, from misunderstanding it, and refusing other authority, were to reject the tenth, should we say that this man has any faith at all? A Catholic will unhesitatingly say that he has none. And if this be true, what an awfully serious consideration it is to any one who acknowledges that faith is necessary for justification.

Let us listen to what Protestants themselves say of the matter; for their own language and their own claims will serve greatly to illustrate the real nature of their tenets, even those in which they are right. Suppose what is called an orthodox Protestant were to be engaged in a dispute with an Arian, who denies that our Lord is really God, and says that He is only the most exalted of all creatures. The Arian appeals to various texts of Scripture, which he interprets in favour of his own opinion, and says that in consequence of these and other passages, his opinion is that our Lord is only a creature. The orthodox Protestant, however, could bring forward texts on the other hand to prove the divinity of our Lord; the passages he would

bring forward are, it is true, stronger than those of his opponent, yet still what can he say to his opponent that his opponent cannot also say to him? Each person *thinks* his own proofs strong and conclusive. Each of them can but say, it is *my opinion* that the passages which I bring forward ought to be interpreted in the way I understand them. I am not taking the case of one who would appeal to other authority, but of the person who would appeal to nothing else but his own private judgment upon the text of Scripture. He could say nothing for himself that the Arian could not also say. Neither of them could say any thing more than that such is my opinion—opinion is all he can claim to have.

Thus it is that the use of the word opinion has become so prevalent; from the fact, that although men frequently confuse it with something higher, yet they feel that it expresses more correctly the real nature of their tenets than any other word would. Indeed, it will appear evident that it cannot be the case that those parts of a Protestant's system which are true, cannot be said to be held by way of belief, and those which are not true by way of opinion, because the distinction between belief and opinion does not depend upon the *correctness* of the view held, but upon the *manner* in which it is held.* And if those in which he is *right* are to be called belief, so must the others also; for he

* Or rather, upon the *foundation* upon which it is built.

can say as much for one as the other; he alleges the authority of Scripture for both equally. For instance, he, as he thinks, proves from Scripture that the Pope is Antichrist, as well as that we are justified by faith—the latter being true, and the former untrue. He has precisely the same grounds for both, that is, his private interpretation. So that as that point in which he is wrong cannot be said to be belief, neither can the other.

This, however, is so very important a question, that it deserve entering into rather more fully. And to do this it is necessary to bear in mind several things relating to the nature of the Sacred Volume. It is evident, even at first sight, that the Bible does not give us any ready-made creed or system; the doctrines which it contains are not arranged systematically, but are scattered here and there; it only contains the *materials* of a system, and to form a system is an act of individual judgment and skill. Now who that endeavours to put one together for himself out of the scattered truths that he meets with, can say at any time that his system is complete, or that he has not chosen as parts of it things which upon further search he will cast aside? * Moehler says, “He who grounds his faith

* Thus, when a Protestant tells a Catholic to study the Scriptures, he does so with a view of inducing him to *cast aside* doctrines which he now considers to be Scriptural. A more ultra-Protestant does the same thing in turn to *him*, and thinks that by more mature study he would cast aside the doctrine of the sacraments,

on Scripture only, that is on the result of his exegetical studies, *has no faith, can have none, and understands not its very nature. Must he not always be ready to receive better information? Must he not admit the possibility that by mature study of Scripture another result may be obtained than that which has been already arrived at?* The thought of this very possibility precludes the establishment of any decided, perfectly undoubting, and unshaken faith, which after all is alone deserving of the name. He who says, this is *my faith, has no faith.* Faith, unity of faith, universality of faith, are one and the same; they are but different expressions of the same notion. He who, if even he should not believe the truth, yet believes truly, believes at the same time that he holds the doctrine of Christ, that he shares the faith with the Apostles and with the Church founded by the Redeemer, that there is but one faith in all ages, and one only true one. This faith is alone rational, and worthy of man; *every other should be called a mere opinion.*”—Moehler’s Symbolism, Eng. trans. Vol. ii. p. 44.

or perhaps of our Lord’s divinity, In fact, if a Protestant thinks that a Catholic by more mature study of Scripture would be led to cast aside things which he now receives as Scriptural, surely there is a possibility of the very same thing happening to himself.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY IN ORDER THAT A WRITTEN DOCUMENT MAY BE PROPERLY CALLED AN AUTHORITY.

How then, it will be asked, if Protestants build their tenets upon Scripture, does the Catholic statement that Protestants have no faith at all, harmonize with the Catholic definition, that belief is assent upon testimony or authority?

In answer to this, I would observe, that that which is in itself an authority, is not always an authority to *every one* and in *every question*. Certain *conditions* then are necessary, in order that a writing may be an authority to a person. It is quite evident that a person may fully recognize the *veracity* of a writing, and yet it does not follow that it is any authority to him. A Greek Testament, for instance, is no authority to a person who does not understand Greek, though he may be ever so fully persuaded of the truth of the book. Though abstractedly it may be an authority, yet it is no authority to *him*, and the reason of this obviously is, because it is unintelligible. The same would be true not only where the understanding of a thing is impossible, but also where it admits of being taken in more ways than one; or at least when practi-

cally men do take it in more ways than one. And that men do not understand the Scripture alike, needs no demonstration. It is doubtful whether there is any one single great truth which it contains, that those who have exercised their private judgment upon it have been agreed upon. Such, for instance, as those that have been already noticed—a judgment to come, for instance; and still more so whether our Lord is very God or only a creature. What can possibly be a more important doctrine than this; and yet it can hardly be doubted that *the majority of those who have gone by their private judgment of Scripture, (including the swarm of Arians, &c.,) have, in one way or other, denied it!* The Bible is such, then, that those who have appealed to it upon their own private judgment, have not even been able to agree as to who their God is! Verily, it is “a sealed book;” and while it is a sealed book, is it an “*authority*” even to those who acknowledge its truth, and endeavour to explore its mysteries?*

* It said of the late Dr. Arnold that, when some one was speaking of the intelligibility of the Scriptures, he said, “Why should not the Scriptures be intelligible to an ordinary reader, just as Aristotle or Thucydides?” In answer to this I would ask, how do we know that we do understand Aristotle? of course the answer would be, “that nobody has any doubt about it; put a quantity of persons in separate rooms to read it, and they will be pretty unanimous as to its general meaning.” If they were so in the case of the Bible, I would fully grant that *it* is as intelligible as any ordinary book. Protestants themselves however allow that they

The truth of the Catholic saying, therefore, that Protestants have nothing more than opinions, depends, (among other things,) upon the fact, that there is no one article upon which all who have gone by their private interpretation of Scripture for a rule of faith, are agreed upon. The difference of opinion is sufficient to make it merely opinion, even in those who, to some extent, are right. We acknowledge the same kind of thing even among ourselves. For our rule of faith is the authority of the existing Church; the living, speaking voice of existing persons. Now there are certain articles of faith which all Catholics receive upon the authority of the existing Church; their reception of them is essential to their belonging to the society. They are only received into it upon making profession of them, and are ejected from it when they are found to deny them. Besides these great articles of faith, however, which every Catholic is agreed upon, and which he receives upon the authority of the Church as being the religion which our Lord delivered to his Apostles, there are a great variety of minor points about which not all Catholics are agreed. And for these we do not claim any thing more than the name of opinion; and that quite irrespectively of whether they are true or not. Things about which we are not unanimous, we call

only understand part of it, and there are many things that none of them can at all explain.

matters of opinion ; as well with those who hold the right side of the question, as those who hold the wrong side. A thing universally received amongst us, whatever it may be, is belief ; things that are only partially received, are only matters of opinion ; unless, indeed, they have been sanctioned by formal decree ; and then those who hold them would be said to believe them ; but any one who rejected them, would not only have merely an opinion as opposed to belief on these particular points, but would lose all faith altogether, and would be cast out of the Church.

Such seems to be the case with regard to what most Protestants consider to be the great principle of Protestantism, namely, that each person who can read is at liberty to search the Scriptures for himself before he is under any obligation to receive any, even of the most sacred truths of the Gospel. It is a principle which, however, in its full extent is never carried out ; for almost all *do* receive a great many truths which are proposed to them *before* they have proved them for themselves. The principle is subject to a great variety of modifications ; indeed it is obviously impossible to carry it out to its full length, otherwise *those who cannot read would have no faith at all* ; it would be lawful and proper for them to defer all belief until they have learnt to read, and in the mean while they need believe nothing. So glaring an

absurdity, however, can never be seriously maintained by any one ; accordingly, to meet this difficulty, it is said, that these persons ought to accept the word of others, the living and speaking voice of their parents or teachers ; so that in spite of themselves, Protestants are obliged continually to recur to the Catholic principle to help them from their difficulties ; may the time come when they shall do so universally, and without choosing and rejecting truths as the humour may suit them at the moment !

Farther than this : the more serious and better sort of Protestants would surely acknowledge it to be not only an absurdity for persons who cannot read, to say that they will wait till they can before they will believe, but besides this, they would certainly allow that it would be highly improper for some persons, in some conditions, even if they *can* read, to reject everything till they have proved it for themselves ; the way in which these persons ought to adopt the Protestant principle, it is said, is in that they ought to follow the opinions of *capable persons*, who may be trusted as safe expositors of the Bible ; of course no rule can be given either as to who is a safe expositor, or what his qualifications are to be, or on the other hand to draw any line between those who must go to such an expositor, and those who need not—of course each person thinks that he himself *need not* do so. What arguments would a Protestant use to persuade

him of his error ; that is, supposing that the person who tried so to persuade him claimed for himself what he denied to the other ?

That there is a difficulty, then, in the understanding the Scriptures is what all allow ; and it may seem strange to say, yet it is true, that the great error of Protestants in this point is, not that they make out the Scriptures to be so easy as they do, but that they make them out to be so difficult. In theory they make them very easy, but act as if they were very difficult. They consider them as so difficult, so obscure, so completely a sealed book, that there was no one for a period of several hundred years who was capable of at all entering into their true meaning and spirit ; and that even in these latter ages it is the privilege of a very few to do so, a few, that is the sect of Protestants to which they themselves belong, which of course is so small as to bear no comparison whatever in point of numbers with the great body of Christendom which thinks differently. The book of Homilies, for instance, of the Church of England, considers that men were so utterly unable to ascertain the true meaning and spirit of the Bible, as not even to be able to ascertain the meaning of the very first commandments, and were wholly mistaken as to the nature of idolatry ; this book asserts that the whole world was drowned in damnable idolatry for the space of 800 years.* Thus, notwith-

* Pages 223, 224.

standing all the helps which our Lord promised to bestow upon His Church; notwithstanding His own perpetual Presence, and the spiritual gifts vouchsafed for the very purpose of guiding men into all truth, in virtue of which office the Holy Spirit which He gave to His Church is emphatically called the "Spirit of Truth," and which He promised should abide with the Church for ever, yet which Protestants deny to be the case, in that they speak of the Church as corrupt, and divided, and false; notwithstanding all this, then, for all these 800 years, no one could gather from the Bible what was idolatry and what was not!

It seems altogether contrary to common sense to maintain, whoever it is that does so, that the Scriptures are wholly unintelligible; else for what purpose were they given us? The sacred volume is a gift of God to mankind, and therefore of course whatever obscurities there may be in it, still it was meant to be of use; men were meant to profit and be instructed by the study of it. Obviously, however, certain conditions are necessary, on the part of a given individual, in order that it may be of use to *him*. He must, in the first place, be able to read it; he must also have a certain quantity of *time* to devote to it; also a certain amount of ability, I do not say greater than the average, yet *some* of course; also he must have the divine assistance of God's Holy Spirit in order to assist him and

make what he reads profitable. Yet we do not know that these are *all* the requisites; ability is not enough without divine assistance, nor is such divine assistance usually given as shall suffice without the being able to read, or without the use of the natural faculties. The following consideration may lead us to the solution of the question, whether there is any farther requisite for the right understanding of the Bible, and if so, what it is.

We may quite agree with the saying of Dr. Arnold above-mentioned, that there is a general resemblance between the study of the Scriptures and that of any other book; now in undertaking to interpret successfully any other book, one thing that is required is a certain quantity of *introductory knowledge*. We could not understand a treatise upon physical astronomy without much previous preparation, without having read other books before. Just the same is the case in the study of the Scriptures; all parties, even Protestants, allow that it is of the highest importance that the reader of them should, before going to them, have some knowledge of what *he is to look for* in them; for this purpose they circulate *tracts* which contain a brief view of what they consider the main subject of the Bible, just as Catholics supply those whom they teach, with creeds and catechisms for the same purpose. It will appear then from this and the preceding chapters, that

one condition in order that a true document may be not only true but an authority to its readers, is, that it should be intelligible. By an intelligible document I mean, not one which men *ought* to understand all in one manner, but which in matter of fact and in practise they *do* understand all in one manner. Now how does the sacred volume answer to this description of an intelligible book? Surely it is not too much to say, that no book that has ever been written has been so differently understood as this has, and even in matters of the highest moment, such for instance as who our God is, and whether we shall be judged according to our works.

Our first condition, then, in order that it may become an authority, is, that it should be such that men shall interpret it in only one way, or that if it is not such in its own nature, there should be some *Key* to the interpretation of it, which shall enable men to understand it in the same way; and that thus we may be assured of our own interpretation being the right one, by the fact of its agreeing with that which every body else put upon it. (See the note relating to the saying of Dr. Arnold, quoted above.) The necessity of having something of the kind is felt in some measure by Protestants, who almost all of them make more or less awkward attempts to supply the deficiency of this key. Such for instance as the publication of tracts. If the Bible needs no expositor, why

publish expositions of it? The fact is, they have misgivings about the correctness of their own principle, and do not in reality believe that the meaning of the Bible is evident to all without an expositor, either in its details or even in what they call its leading idea ; for it is just this leading idea which they think it most necessary to write upon and explain their views of.

Besides this there is another condition necessary: its nature and reality may be made clear by the following illustration. There is a work of fiction among the Anglicans, written with the view of showing that a perfectly unprejudiced study of the Bible would make a person an Anglican ; and in order to give an instance of this perfectly unprejudiced study, the hero of the book is made to be cast in his infancy on a desert island with no one but his father, who, being a pantheist, was careful to avoid all mention of religion : so that the child grew up to manhood, without receiving any religious prejudice from any human being. (The writer of this book, it must be observed, had the acuteness to see that nothing short of being absolutely isolated from the sound of all religion could secure a perfect want of prejudice ; and this alone shows the book to be utterly unpractical, and is a witness that, in practice, all men have religious prejudices with which they go to the Scripture, and which give a colour to their interpretation : so that, in a peopled country, an

unprejudiced study is not to be found.) The father, however, of this child was a man of some learning, and by accident a chest of books was washed on shore : these he made use of to teach his son to read ; he also taught him the Greek language. The father in the course of time died, and the son was left alone ; in which condition he was discovered by a French ship, which brought him away from the island. He had previously, however, been much perplexed as to the origin and destiny of himself, and all that he saw around him. During his voyage he had some conversation with some of the crew upon religious subjects. His chief friend, with whom he sympathised most, was the captain, who was much the same sort of man as his father had been. Upon arriving at the country where the ship was bound, he found somewhere on shore a single leaf of the Bible. It happened to be the first leaf of the volume, and, consequently, was headed Genesis. This, though in English letters, he at once recognized to be identical with the Greek *γένεσις*, and understood it to mean creation. He read on, and was highly pleased with the account, and assented to what he read.

Now, can we possibly call this *faith* ? Can we, by any stretch of meaning, say that *faith* can result from the reading of a chance leaf which he found by accident in the road, and which he had no means of knowing that it was

ever meant as a true relation, and not as an allegory, or even as a mere work of fiction? There is not a person in existence who would say that a mere piece of printed paper, found by accident, *was an authority!* However true its contents may be, yet something is needed for making it an authority—some *voucher for its genuineness* is wanted, otherwise no opinion that we may form upon its contents can be anything more than an opinion, in that it is not built on authority. And this will be very evident from the nature of authority. Now, it is quite evident that authority denotes *obligation*. When a person has *authority* over another, it implies that the person over whom he has it is bound to submission to him under certain penalties, and faith is a dependance upon this authority. Now, who will say that a person is bound to follow the directions which he reads in a printed paper which he finds by accident, and without any one to vouch for its genuineness? Surely, to say that a person is bound, and that under the heaviest penalties, to follow all that he finds in an unattested and unauthorized piece of printed paper, exceeds all bounds of human credibility. And, unless we are thus bound to it, however true it may be, it is no authority, for nothing can be an authority to us unless we are bound to it under penalty. If a savage were to find an English Bible, would it be a distinct sin in him not to receive it? It

will doubtless be said that this will depend upon the circumstances under which it comes to him. If he were to find it in the road, for instance, without any one to vouch for its genuineness, no one will say that the fact of his finding it binds him to anything which he was not bound to before. But if, on the contrary, it were delivered to him as a book of instruction, by men who could give an account of how they came by it themselves, and who those persons who gave it to them received it from in their turn, and so on up to the original publication of it, the case will be widely altered. In a case of this sort, where the genuineness of a printed paper is attested by the word of those who deliver it to us, it may be obligatory, but not however when it comes to us unvouched. In those cases, then, in which it is obligatory, it is the testimony or authority *of those who present it to us* that makes it so, otherwise it is not, and therefore is not an authority. In order, then, that a printed paper may be an authority to us, there must be some *second* authority upon which we receive it—some one who is strictly and properly an authority, some one, that is, whom we are bound to listen to, and accept what we are told by him, and are held guilty if we do not—some one from whom we are bound to accept the *whole* message that he brings us; otherwise we are not bound to accept that particular part in which he says that the Bible is the word of

God, and which, if we are not bound to accept it, is not an authority. To speak of the Bible, then, as being strictly the sole authority in matters of faith, is in reality to deny that *it* is an authority, for there can be *no sole printed authority*.* Without recognizing, therefore, the authority of the *Church*, which delivers the Scriptures to us, and vouches for their truth, they are themselves no authority. We should not be held to obey them, unless there were persons appointed to deliver them to us, whom we were bound to listen to. When a savage rejects the Scriptures, and sins in so doing, his real and immediate sin consists in the rejection of the *living* word of the missionary who offers them, and it is for this that he will be accountable; but, as I have said before, he would by no means be accountable for rejecting the volume, if he found it anywhere, untestified, and unvouched for. I hope from this it will be clear that the Holy Scriptures, though every sentence and every word of them is true, are yet not an authority to those who reject the authority upon which they come to us—that of the Church, for if there was no Church, the Scriptures would not be binding. But more of this hereafter. What has been said with regard to the allegi-

* To assert that there is, would be to fall into the absurdity above mentioned, of supposing that a savage would be bound under penalty to obey a book which he met with accidentally, and without any one to vouch for it.

ance due to the written word of God, may be illustrated by the case of the laws of the land, and the allegiance we owe to them. In all governments there are two powers—a legislative and an executive; the province of the former is to make the laws, that of the latter to set them before us, and see to their execution. It belongs to the legislative power *jus dare*; to certain parts of the executive, that is the judges, *jus dicere*, i. e. to define and state what the law is; and if it were not for these, the numberless printed acts of parliament that are in existence would have no force at all; indeed, it is a contradiction of terms to say that a person is amenable to the law, if there is no person to define what the law is, and in what the transgression of it consists. The very fact of punishment for an offence implies a decision made by some person or other, either rightly or wrongly, that a law had been broken. It is the executive which *enforces* or *gives force* to the law, and thus constitutes it authoritative. The mere printed document is of no authority whatever, without lawyers or magistrates or others, to define what the law is. Suppose, for example, a person were to find a printed act of parliament, how would he be assured, even granting it to be a genuine one—how would he know that it was still in force, and in the form in which he there finds it? How would he know, without external authority, that it had never

been amended or repealed? If there were not some such authority, the person would not be required to act upon it—neither, indeed, *could* he be. Printed acts of parliament can only be of authority to the individual *through* those who define them and see to their execution. These it is who *practically* constitute them authoritative; not, indeed, that their voice is necessary to *ratify* them and make them real laws, for this would be to give them the power *jus dandi*, of having a share in *making* the law, whereas their province is quite distinct, and is *jus dicere*, to declare and define it. Both these two are indispensable that laws may have authority over us.

In like manner, the Holy Scriptures would not be of authority, unless there were some external authority to witness for them and define them. We could not, in the first place, know their genuineness at all, without some living voucher* for it; nor could we, even granting their genuineness, know that no repeal of them had ever taken place, as there has in the case of the old law. The old law we know to have

* It is of course by no means necessary that the voucher for the truth, &c. of a printed or written document should have spoken to us upon the subject before he puts it into our hands; it is enough if such a voucher exists, provided that we have the means of consulting him, and can certainly obtain an answer. Thus if we were to receive a letter on the Queen's service, it is of authority, because we have certain means of ascertaining its genuineness. If such a letter is genuine, there is always some one to vouch for it, and so of letters in general.

been repealed, notwithstanding the command given in Deuteronomy neither to add to nor to take away from anything in that book. How do we know that, notwithstanding a very similar passage in the Book of Revelations, that something of the same kind has not happened in the case of the new law, or at least that its requirements have been greatly modified, just in the same way that the old law was by the new? Or, again, not only was there an abolition of the old law, notwithstanding the command to take away nothing, but there was also, as time went on, the *addition* of a great number of other books to the canonical Scriptures, which would seem, from the words in Deuteronomy, to have been complete at the death of Moses, just as the passage in the Apocalypse might lead us to infer that the canon of the New Testament was complete at St. John's death; yet, how do we know but what, as in the former case, so in the latter, an increase or at least a development may have taken place? This is, in fact, one of the great questions which is being agitated at present among Protestants, namely, whether the whole of the New Testament is binding upon us of the present age. A large portion of them think that many of its ordinances were never intended to continue always; that they were only adapted for Christianity in its infancy, when it had need of props and stays which it is supposed not to need now. Such a question is that of baptism.

Another is that relating to fasting. Though our Saviour Himself practised it, and that, too, not in obedience to the Jewish law, which required nothing like what he practised, but as being *His own* way of acting—not as a Jew, but as a Teacher, and as the founder of a polity, and as the exemplar of an improved way of life. He underwent *circumcision* in the character of a member of the synagogue, but His extraordinary fast He underwent in His character of Founder of the Church, and Teacher of what the best mode of life consisted in. His apostles, in like manner, fasted; and we may gather, as Mr. Newman says, from the fact of Timothy being told to drink no longer water, that such was the usual practice among the stricter Christians of that day, and that he was recommended to dispense with it not as being unnecessary, but for his “stomach’s sake”—that is, for the good of his health. Yet, notwithstanding all this, notwithstanding that our Lord expressly said, that when the bridegroom was taken away from them they should fast; and in His Sermon on the Mount gave them directions how to do it as He would have them, Protestants, for the most part, doubt whether it is binding *on us*—that is to say, whether this part of the new law has not been tacitly yet certainly repealed, just like parts of the old law were formally.

And this may be therefore mentioned as a third condition. In order that a printed docu-

ment may be an authority, there must be some one to vouch for its applicability to *us*—that is to say, that it has never been repealed or modified. Where all these conditions are satisfied—viz., where the printed document is intelligible, or has some key to make it so, and where there is *another* authority to vouch both for its genuineness, and for its applicability to our own times, it is an authority; otherwise not, however true it may be in itself. For it is quite contrary to all our ideas of responsibility, to think that a person is responsible for not acting upon an unvouched and obscure printed document; or, in other words, that such a document is an authority to him.

CHAPTER VI.

STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC PRINCIPLE, OR RULE OF FAITH.

THE foregoing chapter has been intended for a description of the Protestant principle, with some of its chief difficulties and defects. It is defective, in that it does not give persons the opportunity of having faith; while yet it acknowledges the all-importance of faith, it puts him off with mere opinions. It refers him to written documents as his sole authority, while it denies

the existence of that which alone can make them authoritative, namely, on the one hand some living witness for their genuineness and applicability to the present times, and also on the other hand an authoritative interpreter of them; so that a reader may have something more to say in favour of his own view, than the person has who comes to exactly the opposite conclusion.

It is just these defects which the Catholic system supplies. Does the Bible, in common with all other written documents, require some one to vouch for its genuineness, and by its testimony to make it binding upon us, and to keep it from corruption in the course of ages? THE CHURCH comes before us as "the witness and keeper of Holy Writ," (Art. of the Church of England.) as the witness by which we know what is to be received as canonical, and what is not. Who, without this, could tell that the books of the Bible are inspired, or whether there were not other books besides what we have in the New Testament, and which have been lost, as the Book of Jasher in the Old? Again, does the Bible speak of itself as being a sealed book? The Catholic Church claims to furnish us with a key, so that by the use of it all necessary doctrine shall, under ordinary circumstances, be so plain that "he who runs may read." It does not leave us to our own private interpretation of it, or to that of any private individual whatever, how-

ever highly gifted or learned ; it sets before us doctrine which has a much higher, and, in fact, a claim differing *in kind* from that which any other doctrine has upon our acceptance. The Catholic Church does not say: "What we teach you has been deduced from Scripture by the private judgment of able men in our communion, though it is in Scripture ;" Catholic truth, though Scriptural, is *older* than the Scripture, and therefore it would be contradictory to say that it is derived *from* Scripture.* Catholic truth was derived *from the mouth of our Lord*, and delivered to the Apostles before the New Testament was written, and was ordered by Him to be proclaimed to all nations, and handed on to remote posterity, to be delivered from one generation to another—in fact, to be handed on by *tradition*. And, not only this, but He provided means for the continuance of this tradition, pure and uncorrupt, to the end of time ; and gave to the Church "the Spirit of Truth," which should "remain with it for ever," and by reason of its having the Spirit of Truth, it cannot do otherwise than teach the truth, which, therefore, those to whom it speaks are bound to believe. Thus, the Catholic Church in speaking does not merely deliver the opinion of its learned

* Thus, strange as it may seem to say so, the very fact of saying that a religious system was *derived* from Scripture is to prove it to be unscriptural; for if it is really scriptural it is older than Scripture.

men, but it speaks *authoritatively*, as having had a system of Truth committed to it, which it is its bounden duty always to keep and to proclaim, and which all are bound to accept. We see, then, that the Catholic system is a system, not of opinions, but of *testimony*—a system in which one generation *testifies* to the succeeding one to what it had itself in like manner received. Thus it is a system of tradition, and Catholicism is the acceptance of such tradition as we find it existing in our day.

The case of Catholics, then, may be thus briefly stated : A Catholic receives what he holds entirely upon the authority of the Church ; his tenets are not the result of his own investigation, either into Scripture or other records of antiquity ; he has not derived them from independent personal study, but receives them because they are told him, and that by men who, like himself, do not deliver them to him as the result of their own independent study, but as being what has been delivered to them. These in turn profess to have received from their predecessors what they hand on to their successors, and so on in a regular chain up to the time of the Apostles. Thus it is that the Catholic tenets are belief, and not opinions. They are not founded upon private judgment, either our own or that of others, but upon testimony. We receive the word of men who *testify* to what they have *seen and heard*. We “believe the report”

which the Catholic Church makes, and listen to the "sound" which it sends out "into all lands." The hearing and receiving of this is belief.

The apostles, who were the first link in the chain which connects the present generation with the Saviour, testified to what they had seen and heard; and impressed or stamped a certain view of truth, such as they had received themselves, upon the minds of their hearers. These, in like manner, did to others as they had been done to themselves, and these in their turn to others; each generation relying upon the testimony of the preceding one, which asserted that it had received what it teaches from its predecessor; and so on to the beginning. Such is the ordinary case of ecclesiastical tradition. This, then, is the principle of the Catholic Church, as distinguished from that of Protestants: to go by the *existing* tradition, or that which we find in existence in our own times. The rigid Protestant theory, on the other hand, being that nothing need be received until it has been tested by appeal to written documents. Such at least is their theory, though it is impossible to any great extent to put it in practice, so repulsive is it to human nature to act in such a way, that men *will* receive many things which are told them before personal examination, in spite of their being told again and again that it is unprotestant to do so.

Catholics, then, take the word tradition in its usual sense, which is to designate "that which now exists." In common language, when we speak of going by a tradition, we of course mean a tradition which exists at the time when men so go by it. In like manner, by an ecclesiastical tradition we mean one which now exists. By "tradition," Catholics do not mean simply what extant documents, as interpreted by individuals, *lead them to suppose* our Lord to have delivered to his Apostles, or they to their successors, or the second age to the third, or the third to the fourth, but what our predecessors have delivered to us. All attempts to go by any thing else the Catholic Church considers but as modifications or different forms of one and the same principle—the principle of private judgment. Not that we mean to deny that the primitive Christian tradition is ascertainable; but, on the contrary, we assert that, in all its main features, it is ascertainable with a greater certainty than attaches to any other historical investigation whatever. Only it is strongly maintained by us, that the only true and Christian way of doing so is by means of the existing tradition of the Church. Nor, indeed, do we mean to deny the possibility of a person ascertaining the traditions of the early Church by private personal study of the writings of the early Fathers; nor do we attempt to calculate the chances which there are that a given individual

will do so correctly—what we mean is, that to attempt to do so is virtually to take the same grounds, and to go upon the same principle as the person who attempts to go by his private judgment of Scripture. That the line which distinguishes the two principles is to be drawn here, is what I think will be apparent to any one. The difference of principle consists in the *way* in which we ascertain truth, not in the admitting more or less books into our canon. The real difference is between those who go by private judgment upon the writings of a past age, and those who receive the testimony of the present. Catholics do, it is true, appeal with the highest confidence both to the Scriptures and to the Fathers; but this is, as is well known, done with a far different view to that of those who search them to know what they are to believe. Catholics search them, not to build their own tenets upon what their own judgment says is in these writings; they do so, partly from the pleasure which they feel in holding such intercourse as they can with saints and learned men of their own communion, who have lived in other times, in order that they may, as it were, catch their spirit, and profit by their fellowship. They also partly use them for the sake of being able to meet on their own grounds those who appeal to them; but not for their own satisfaction. For even when upon studying the writings of the ancients, we may fall upon anything that does

not seem quite in accordance with our own belief, it does not move us at all; for we have no doubt but that either we misunderstand the passage, or else that the general tone and tenor of patristic teaching is quite in accordance with our own belief, even if the language of one or two of them may be wanting here and there in theological accuracy, as it undoubtedly is even in the great doctrines of Christianity, until by reason of controversy having arisen, a definite set of expressions came into use for speaking of the doctrine in question—the seeming inaccuracy which is sometimes met with being owing rather to the want of precise phraseology than to a heretical disposition, which want of precise phrases became supplied when controversy arose upon the subject. Thus, in all great questions that have arisen—such as the divinity of our blessed Lord, or Transubstantiation, or the Incarnation—we shall find a great many of the Fathers who lived before the question arose, who spoke with less accuracy of language than they would have done had they lived afterwards. This is true in every single great controversy which has arisen; of which those I have mentioned are among the chief. Men, then, in examining the Fathers to see what they ought to hold, would, we must allow, upon looking back to those who lived before the controversy arose, find expressions in many of them which would not have been allowed afterwards; and

hence they forthwith conclude that the doctrine of the early Church was different from that of the present. Yet, surely, for most men, this would prove too much. There is at least as much, if not a great deal more, inaccuracy of statement in the Ante-Nicene divines relating to our Lord's divinity, than there is in those who lived before the use of the word transubstantiation was established. This it is, among other things, which makes the inquiry into patristic doctrine one of such great delicacy—namely, the difficulty of deciding how much allowance is to be made for the want of accurate language, or of precision in teaching. That *some* allowance is to be made, is what every one will allow; to deny it would be to prove too much—it would as much prove them to differ from us in the doctrine of our Saviour's divinity, as in any other question in which Protestants differ from us.

It is not by personal study, then, that we are assured of the identity of our own doctrine with that of the Fathers; we have much higher grounds. If it were so, we should have nothing to say for ourselves which our adversaries have not, and could only say, "such is my opinion." What else could we say, when they allege passages against us? What could we say, but that *we do not think* them to have the meaning you put upon them, or else bring forward passages of an opposite tendency, and by comparing the

two, strike the balance as may seem fit? We have a higher and more certain mode of ascertaining what was really the patristic doctrine, than by private judgment; we ascertain *ancient* tradition by means of existing tradition. Both the ancient and the modern church are under the same infallible Guide, and therefore our traditions and theirs, must in reality agree, even if in some points they may seem to be a *primâ facie* difference. And thus we maintain that a person who does not go, by the authority of the existing generation, does not go by the Scriptures or antiquity, any more than by the existing Church; unless, indeed, going by the Scripture or antiquity, and going by one's own private interpretation of them, be one and the same thing.

Catholics, therefore, invariably deny that those who reject the living, speaking voice of the existing Church, have any thing more than opinions; and that whether they profess to go by their private interpretation of Scripture, or the Fathers. The only grounds upon which any thing more than opinion could be claimed, either by one or the other, is, that they are so plain that *all* parties will agree as to what they say. The meaning of them, I fully admit to be so plain as to be understood in the same way by all who have *the key* to the understanding of them, but not to others. Else why are these

disputes?*

Our Lord did, before his ascension, leave on the earth the keys of the kingdom of heaven; but where they are not made use of, the treasures which they unlock will hardly be found.

It must be observed, that we deny any thing more than opinions to those who reject the living, speaking voice of the Church, in order to go by private interpretation of the records of early ages, not from any necessity of there being literally a *voice spoken*, in order to constitute any thing higher than opinion. For it is plain that a priest might instruct a catechumen by letter, as well as by word of mouth; and we should say that the catechumen believed him. This, however, would proceed upon the two-fold supposition—first, that there could be no mistake or doubt about what the contents were; and secondly, and chiefly, upon the fact that if there were any doubt or error in his way of understanding it, it *would be cleared up when he came to have an interview with the priest, and to make his profession of faith*. Thus the correctness of the view that he had gained, would be *tested*. He would state to the priest the sum

* Can it be said to be plain to all men what the doctrine of the Fathers is, when it has divided the establishment from the Church of Rome for three hundred years? Anglicans may indeed think it plainly in their favour, yet at all events all men do not agree about it; to a member of the Roman Catholic communion, however, it is quite plain that the Fathers are on our side, and teach what we now hold, not indeed with the same clearness, or in the same highly developed state, yet quite as truly though implicitly.

and substance of what he held, and would change it if the priest declared it to be erroneous. We would not, in like manner, deny any one to have true faith, if he derived his tenets from the study of the Fathers, provided that he would submit to have them tested by a competent authority. For *then*, what he really relies upon or goes by, is *this authority*. Such, indeed, is the case with many a one converted to the Catholic Church, and indeed was so with myself. Persons may derive their knowledge chiefly from study; yet, if they will test what they have so gained by the living voice of the Church, it is all well and Catholic.

The difference of the two principles may now be stated as follows. The principle of Catholics is to test what they read by what they hear, and that of others, is to test what they hear by what they read. The one is faith, and the other only opinion.

Thus, in studying the Fathers, as long as a person only relies upon his own judgment for the correctness of his view, he has mere opinion; but as soon as he will submit to test it by the living voice of the Church, it becomes belief. Previously to this, however, he does but stand upon the same ground with all other private interpreters, who may have erred in every variety of way. I will not dispute the probability that, after a lengthened study of the Fathers, there would be more chance of a person being right,

than if he were to study the Scriptures only ; it may be so, or it may not ; either one or the other has a tendency to lead him in the right direction, if other things are not wanting in him. He might even find his way without either one or the other, to the place where he ought to be, as many have done ; but be the chance of his understanding the Fathers rightly small or great, he has but opinion ; for they are not so plain that all agree what they say. It seems, indeed, to be as if by a divinely sent infatuation, that when once men have broken away from the Catholic rule of faith, and adopted any thing else instead of it, it has been found utterly impossible to secure any thing like unanimity among themselves. They do not interpret the Fathers uniformly, any more than the Scriptures. There is, it may, I think, safely be said, not one single point upon which men have interpreted uniformly either one or the other. Calvin, for instance, who had seemingly a desire to agree with the Fathers in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, was a Tritheist, or believer in three Gods. Luther was what is called a Ubiquitarian, and said that our Lord's human nature was present everywhere ; or a Eutychian, who said that He had but one nature, which one nature was present everywhere. The Greek schismatics too, who deny that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, and thereby, as St. Thomas says,

destroying the distinction of Persons between the Son and the Holy Spirit, or else denying the unity of substance. Dr. Hampden again, in his Bampton Lectures, though he does not deny the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, treats it as a mere scholastic development which grew up in the fourth century; whereas the great majority of those of his communion allow that the early Fathers of the then first centuries, believed the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

And again, the learned Bishop Bull differs from the still more learned Petavius, as to how near an approach the Ante-Nicene Fathers made to holding the doctrine in the same explicit manner that those who lived afterwards did. Priestley denied that the early Fathers held the divinity of our Lord, and so have a variety of others. Thus in the great and prominent doctrines of the Gospel—the Holy Trinity, and the Incarnation—and much more in less prominent ones, have eminent men differed as to what was the patristic doctrine.

These and other difficulties which occur in the interpretation of antiquity, should surely tend to make persons feel the necessity of going by some authoritative guide to teach the primitive faith, instead either of their own investigations, or even of those who were better able to investigate than themselves.

To enter at length into what is to be said in favour of the Catholic principle or rule of faith,

would be foreign to my purpose, which is rather to explain, as clearly as I can, the difference between it and the rival principle. For it is very rarely, if ever, that arguments can make a person change his principle. All the place that arguments have in a question of this sort, is to bring out, and prove, and illustrate the reality of the distinction attempted to be drawn; not to induce men to follow the one when they had hitherto been going by the other. Nor do I endeavour to lay them side by side, in order to induce a person to change the principle he has always been used to; for I assume that as a person has always done, so will he continue to do. The use of doing so is rather to let a person see in what direction, and to what goal his principles upon which he is acting, are conducting him, and to put in a right direction any one whose principles in this respect have not yet taken any very decided form.

The fact is, that in the extreme confusion that has prevailed of late, there are very few indeed in Protestant communities that really know *what their own principles of action are*: and that for the very reason that they are altogether indefinite. In fact, they have none. The principle I have endeavoured to describe as the Protestant principle, of going by one's own private judgment upon the early writings, either of the first century, or the first seven or eight, is rather a theory than a practical principle. It is

one that is rarely, if ever, acted upon; and there is hardly any body who, if hard pressed, would not deny that he does strictly act upon it. For if you ask him how it is that he is likely to be right at the cost of so many being wrong, he will be sure to point to *others* who hold as he does; this is, at all events, to acknowledge that what others hold has *something* to do with what he himself holds. Thus, while professing the Protestant principle in words, he will, nevertheless, put forward as his reason for thinking as he does, that it is the way of thinking prevalent in his community. So that here he makes a near approach to the Catholic principle. And indeed, as has been said, all Protestants do receive all or nearly all the doctrines they hold, long before they have proved them for themselves from the Bible. A child in the English Church, or in most other Protestant communities, is taught the divinity of our Lord, and receives it before he has proved it for himself. An Anglican child is also, frequently, taught the real presence of our blessed Lord in the Sacrament, and receives it before he proves it to his own satisfaction. Why not believe before proof, *all* the doctrines of the Church universal? Protestants have been, for the most part, going upon Catholic principles, rather than the one they professed; why not do so consistently? Why not receive the doctrines which the Church universally teaches, I do not

say instead of, but as well as, those which their particular community recommends to them? They can give no consistent reason for not doing so. I might say to a Protestant, if you must receive a great deal before proof, why not receive the whole of what the universal Church teaches, rather than merely the part of the truth which your actual teacher proposes? What is there about him that makes it necessary for you to receive his word before proof, but allowable to reject what the universal Church teaches? If you would but be content to receive without at present seeing them, the doctrines which the Catholic Church proposes as scriptural, just as you did those proposed by the person who taught you when you were a child, you would soon feel a far more firm conviction that they are scriptural, than you can have of any thing that you hold now. For not only has the Church universal all the claim upon a person which any private teacher has, but she has much more. Let me but ask, *upon what grounds* ought a Protestant child to receive the word of his teacher? What would the teacher reply, if the child were to ask him this question? What are the child's feelings when he accepts as true, the word of his teacher? His feelings, if I mistake not, are much the same as those with which a Catholic accepts the word of his Church. "Infallibility" is a long word; a word which few children have ever

heard of; yet does not a child accept the word of its teacher with a sort of feeling that he cannot be mistaken in what he is teaching him? The sole difference in this respect, between Catholic grown persons and Protestant children is, that the former do professedly and upon system, what the latter do unthinkingly and unconsciously, yet not less really. A Protestant child will think that there can be no doubt that his teacher understands the Bible rightly; which is but an implicit way of thinking him infallible.

Such is the principle upon which Protestants act naturally and spontaneously when they are children; it is identical with that upon which Catholics act always. And this may serve as a further illustration of the difference between the Catholic and the rival principle. The one is the principle of little children, the other is not so. Does not this bring to our mind the words of our Lord, when He spoke of receiving the kingdom of heaven as little children? And when we warn people that they have no true faith unless they accept unreservedly the teaching of the existing Church, are we doing any thing else than echo the words of our Saviour when He said, Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein?

These words of our Saviour, if reflected upon, will speak more than a volume. We may

gather from them a clear and plain statement of the entire principle upon which we ought to proceed. They seem as if they would set at rest all questions relating to a rule of faith—*the only true rule of faith is that which little children go by*—others are not rules of faith at all, and furnish us with no faith; with nothing but opinions. Is it the way of a little child to say that it will not receive the word of its teachers till it has tested it by the Scriptures? Still more, is it the way of a little child to say that it will test it by the writings of the Fathers? This surely would less enter into the head of a little child, and if it did, would be more absolutely out of his power than to test them by the Bible. It precludes the very idea of this kind of examination altogether. To search into antiquity with a view to ascertaining the evidence upon which such and such an existing tradition rests, previous to a final acceptance of it, is to receive the kingdom of heaven, or to try to receive it, in the opposite manner to what little children would do.

There is only one kind of examination which appears at all in accordance with the ways of little children; and that is just the kind of examination which takes place in an ecclesiastical council. It should be well observed, that in a council of the Church, what men meet for is, not to examine whether what they *have received from the generation preceding them is true*

or false; but to ascertain with greater certainty *what it is that they have so received*. There is all the difference in the world between ascertaining what it is that you have been taught, and examining whether what you have been taught is true. And in this appears the difference between Catholic councils and Protestant synods. The object of the one is to ascertain with greater accuracy what it is that has been delivered to them; that of the other to examine whether what has been delivered to them is true. The one is what little children might do; the other is to act in a contrary way. We see that there is a different spirit and a different purpose altogether in the proceedings of the two different kinds of assembly; that of the one being to hand on to posterity unimpaired what they have received from the preceding generation; that of the other to purify what they have so received. That of the one to ascertain with greater accuracy, and to embody in a more precise phraseology, the existing tradition; that of the other to examine whether existing tradition is primitive. The one requires merely a statement of what you have seen and heard; the other requires arduous investigation, which little children are utterly unequal to. The one is the Christian, the other the heretical principle.

Of course, those who adopt the latter always conceive that they have some irresistible reason

for doing so; they invariably say that however desirable abstractedly to go by the voice of the existing Church, yet there is something in its present circumstances or condition which renders it unsafe or impossible to do so. The most common excuse is, that the Church is corrupt. This has been by far the most prevalent in all ages. Another is, that the Church is divided; or again, that the decisions of the Church have been made upon wrong principles; or that she is ill-informed upon the matters on which she speaks. Or again, objections of a more vague nature are sometimes made; such as that the Church is asleep, or in captivity, or in bondage, or the like.

All these objections, however, and any others that may be made, come to this;—that it is *impossible at present*, to receive the kingdom of heaven as little children. Whatever difficulties the aspect of the existing Church at any time may present, yet nothing can make an appeal to antiquity the proceeding of little children. If there were any fatal defect in his living teacher, a little child would give up the case as hopeless. A little child knows no alternative between accepting the voice of a living teacher, and going by none at all.

Let Protestants, or any other schismatics, consider that however great the difficulties may be, whatever obstacles there may be to their doing so, yet there are now and always have

been, millions of Christians on the earth who are actually doing so, in spite of what seem to those who do not, insuperable objections.

But to consider these questions briefly in detail. What does a child know of the corruptions of the Church? How is he to ascertain them? And how does a grown-up person ascertain them, or think that he does? By reference to antiquity. Rather then would a child of ordinary sagacity see the inconsistency of those who say that they search antiquity *because* the existing Church is corrupt, while they would *also* say that the way in which they ascertain these corruptions is *by* reference to antiquity. They assume as the *grounds* of so acting what they only prove *by means* of thus acting. Again, what does a child know about the Church being divided? How does a child know that the Church was divided at the time of the Council of Trent, and not at that of Nicea? Upon what principle would a little child draw a distinction between Anglicans and Donatists? Or who but an Anglican would say that Donatists were not part of the Church while Anglicans *are*? The same may be said of all the other objections; they are objections which a little child would not make, and therefore, however specious, they are not real ones. Not, however, that I by any means wish to undervalue them under all circumstances; for there are those in certain positions to whom they

appear quite insuperable ; only I would say that to be in a position in which a person is obliged to act as if they were valid, is to be in a *false* position. Let Protestants consider with all attention, whether to be in a position in which they cannot receive the kingdom of God as little children, is not to be in a position in which they cannot enter therein !

And this reminds me of another saying of our Lord to the same purpose. He says to us, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now let it be observed that among Protestants, if it were asked them, "Supposing, as you say, the Bible or antiquity is the true and proper rule of faith, what is to become of those who cannot read, such as little children, or many of the poor?" It will be replied that they are under no difficulty, for they can go by the word of those who can. So that here we have the strange phenomenon of *two* rules of faith ; one for little children, and another for grown-up people ; one for the poor, and another for the rich and educated. What an extraordinary spectacle is this ! two distinct rules of faith ! Surely this is one cause why, among Protestants especially, it will be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the

kingdom of heaven. For, in addition to the difficulties which they have in their way in common with other rich men, they have this amongst others,—that they have ceased to receive the kingdom of heaven as they did when they were little children. Would that they would retrace their steps, and do as they did in their youth, and become as little children!

CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC PRINCIPLE.

IN the preceding chapter it was shown that the Catholic principle is to go by the voice of the existing Church, in contradistinction from the going by private judgment upon the existing records of an earlier age; to go by existing tradition rather than by the notions we may have formed of primitive tradition. In order, however, that this may be a *practical* rule of faith, it needs further exposition. For it is quite evident that the term “tradition” is a very comprehensive one, and includes a great deal. It includes the great and essential doctrines of Christianity, as well as a great number of more minute details, rites, and observances. There are a number of minor points which have

gained more or less popularity in different times and places ; there are shades of doctrine which distinguish between different schools in the Church ; and it is evident that each of these may, in a certain sense, be called a tradition, inasmuch as a tradition is anything that is handed down to us—it is “*id quod traditum est ;*” and it is also equally certain that no one is compelled to believe these minor points on pain of excommunication, or of being regarded as a heretic. We must, therefore, *distinguish* in the use of the word tradition. Tradition may mean either simply anything that has been handed to us, or it may mean what has been handed down to us as necessary to be believed. There are in the Catholic Church these two distinct kinds of tradition. There is one which includes in it the great body of Christian doctrine, which must be held by every one in order to salvation ; and there is another kind which contains other matters, and varies in different schools and places. There is, in fact, a system of *ecclesiastical* doctrine, necessary for all to receive, as well as points which are not necessary. The question which is here to be considered is, how is a person to distinguish between an ecclesiastical doctrine which is necessary, and others which are not ? In fact, in the Catholic rule of faith there are two things to be considered : first, that a Catholic is bound to receive the existing tradition of a certain com-

munity of men now on earth, and next to ascertain what this tradition is. What, then, is the rule for distinguishing between what is *necessary* to be believed, and what is not? Now, it is evident that what is *certainly true* ought to be believed, whereas there is less call upon us to believe what is uncertain: so that anything that is certainly the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church a Roman Catholic will believe, even the minutest points as well as the weightiest matters. Here, however, a distinction must be made in the use of the word "belief." Belief is of two kinds—explicit and implicit. Explicit belief is when a doctrine is a formal article of our creed, such as the resurrection of the body; and implicit belief is when one doctrine is *implied* or contained in another, while, at the same time, we do not entertain any very distinct notion of it. Every article of faith is, in fact, capable of extending itself into an almost infinite variety of ramifications, and distinctions, and developments. These developments are things which we receive *implicitly*, inasmuch as they are *implied* in the article of faith which we receive explicitly. *All* truth must be believed implicitly, though only certain broad outlines of it are required to be believed explicitly. Explicit faith is that which it is necessary that we should be definitely and particularly instructed in, and is comprised in a few articles. Implicit faith comprehends every thing that is true, and which we are not obliged

to be especially instructed in, but which we must receive as far as it is set before us, and when we do not deny it, mentally or by words, we are said to believe it implicitly, though we may have but very little definite idea about it.

The question then is, what are we to *receive as certain*, or, in other words, to believe, and what are those things which we are at liberty to consider as doubtful? An Anglican will say, "Such things as can be traced in a continuous line up to the time of the Apostles: anything that can be so traced must be received." This is undoubtedly true; but without something further, it is quite unpractical. For who is to ascertain whether they are so traceable, and how is it to be done? If a person is unwilling to believe that the existing generation has preserved the truth faithfully, and teaches no more than is really true, there is no other way than by private judgment upon the written records of the several ages, which, as we have before seen, is quite contrary to the canon, if I may so call it, which our blessed Lord gives when He says, that we are to receive the kingdom of heaven as little children. It is, in fact, the Protestant principle in disguise, though, at first sight, it looks something like the Catholic, to do this either by oneself or by others.

It is probable that St. Vincent of Lerins will be here quoted against me, who wrote an excellent treatise to show, "That anything which

had been held *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*—that is, in all times, and in all places, and by the whole Church—was to be esteemed Catholic ;” and also, that “ the boldness of profane novelty is to be with the authority of sacred antiquity.” The force of the objection drawn from these words seems to consist in this. It may be said, that if we are to go by antiquity—e. g., by the doctrine of the first three or four centuries—that we must ascertain this doctrine by searching into the records of those ages, and that the result of this search is to be held as primitive doctrine. This conclusion, however, which Anglicans are apt to draw, does, in reality, by no means follow from the teaching of St. Vincent ; for if there are other and more certain ways of ascertaining the doctrine of *the first* century than by direct and immediate appeal to their writings, why should there not be other ways of ascertaining the doctrine of the *first four* centuries, than by appeal to the extant records of it? If his words quoted above do seem at first sight to say that the doctrines of the existing Church may be examined to see whether any of them are new before we receive them, and that the appeal is to earlier ages, nothing, I am fully persuaded, can in reality be further from the meaning of this admirable writer, or indeed of any of the Fathers, as far as my very small acquaintance with their teaching goes, than to say that they admitted of any appeal from the

existing Church. Surely, any one who reads the Fathers will find that, if he reads them with a view of finding texts in them for settling controversy, they will invariably refer him away from themselves to the existing Church. They know nothing of the Church being corrupt or divided; according to them the one is as impossible as the other. With them it was not a mere *accident* of the Church that it was pure or undivided. As soon as any branch of it did corrupt itself, or divide itself from the mass, it ceased to be part of the Church. They knew nothing of the idea that the existing doctrine of the Church needed to be tested by antiquity: for with them it was a first principle that it must be true, and needed no testing. Any one who holds a different doctrine from this, surely does not go by the Fathers any more than by the existing Church.

To return, however, to St. Vincent, who says that profane novelty is to be repressed with sacred antiquity. This, indeed, is most true, and, I maintain, has always been acted upon in the Catholic Church. Profane novelty *always* has been repressed, and that immediately upon its first appearance. Novelty has always been detected promptly and immediately, and exposed as such. The Catholic Church has always acted strictly upon the rule of St. Vincent in this respect, and it is the error of Anglicans to suppose that it has not. There can be no novelty of

several hundred years' standing in the Church, and that for the very reason that it has always detected it upon its first appearance; and has, according to the rule of St. Vincent, invariably rejected what was contrary to the doctrine delivered by the generations before them, and to what they had themselves received from their immediate predecessor.

It may, however, be worth while to examine his doctrine rather more particularly; and this examination will resolve itself into the consideration of two things: 1. What it is that is to be tested and repressed. 2. What the test to be used is. With regard to the first, he says that it is *novelty* that is to be repressed. Now, surely, we can scarcely apply the term "novelty" to anything that has been of several hundred years' standing—questions, for instance, such as those discussed at the Reformation, doctrines which were admitted by the reformers to have been received for several centuries, scarcely look like novelty. In fact, St. Vincent himself expressly excludes such as these; and says that his rule of looking to the Fathers is only applicable to a heresy in "*its first springing up.*" Commonit. p. 132. Oxf. trans. Next, he says, that is the mark of heresy to come out with its founder's name. "To say truth, what heresy hath ever burst forth but under the name of *some certain man?*" p. 115. and then he enumerates several of them. So that he does not

mean his doctrine to be made use of for the examination and testing of old-standing traditions, but only for the repressing of novelties on their first appearance, and when they are marked with the name of their founder; and, therefore, not to anything which has come down to us as Catholic doctrine, but only to that which professes to be reformed doctrine, like that of Luther or Nestorius, or to any doctrine the promulgator of which *admits* that it does not satisfy the test. The system of truth which the Reformers found in existence was publicly received as the system which alone satisfied the test of St. Vincent, as having been held in all times and by the whole Church—not indeed, perhaps, with the same definiteness and precision in ancient as in more modern times, yet as still identical; claiming to be the representative of that which had been always taught, in earlier as well as in later times, and to express, in more exact terms than any other that could be used, the doctrine which, as St. Vincent says, was “simply credited,” but afterwards became more accurately known, and scientifically stated. It is against *rejection* of any such doctrine, that St. Vincent’s rule is applicable; for *kind*, indeed, the rejectors of it ought to remember that, whether doctrine taught as Catholic satisfies the test of St. Vincent or not, at all events the view which *rejects* such doctrine cannot satisfy the rules, in that even, according to their own admission,

it does not stand the test of being the view held in mediæval times.

2. Secondly, it remains to examine the test proposed by him, which is antiquity. Now, *what* is antiquity? Without deciding this question, the rule will be an unpractical one; accordingly, all parties are forced to make some limit or definition to it. How many centuries, then, of the Christian era is it to include, and how many is it to exclude? Some persons among the Anglicans limit it to the first three centuries, others to the time when "the East and West were divided." But here I would ask, If the the third century is antiquity, why is not the fourth? and if the fourth, why not the fifth? or if the eighth, why not the ninth, &c.? The fact is, "antiquity" being a *relative* term, like "great" or "small," is incapable of an *absolute* definition. We can but define it relatively. Things are great or small only by comparison, and so are they ancient only by comparison. We say that a thing is *antiquated* when it has passed away, or been improved upon, so as no longer to exist in its ancient state. We should call a *custom* antiquated, if it were in full force only a year ago, provided that it were not in force now. Antiquity may extend almost up to the present year. That time, which in one sense we should call ancient, is in another sense modern. We call the Nicene times ancient, yet, compared with those of Abraham, they are

modern ; and what was modern to St. Vincent, is ancient to us.

When, therefore, any one proposes antiquity is a guide, we cannot go upon any general meaning of the word, for it is indefinite ; we must ask him what *he* means by it ; we must ask him to give his rule in other words. So that in applying St. Vincent's rule it is idle to enquire into the general meaning of antiquity, all we are concerned with is *his* meaning. And this we shall see the more easily by bearing in mind what term he opposes to it ; this term is "novelty"—he says, "novelty" is to be repressed by "antiquity ;" so that the two terms are used as opposites. And he has clearly explained what he means by "novelty ;" and limits it to "the first springing up" of a heresy. Antiquity and novelty are here relative and opposite terms ; so that where one commences the other leaves off ; and "novelty" commences with the appearance of a heresiarch, it is plain that antiquity must in strictness extend up to this time in which the novelty commences. That he uses the term in this sense, is quite evident from the whole of his argument. His argument against a heretic would be this:—your heresy was not known till some few years ago, when your founder established it. So that he appeals to the *whole* time up to the appearance of the heresiarch ; and thus he extends the antiquity which he appeals to, up to the present times.

In fact, his rule is identical with the Catholic, (as might be expected from his book having always been so much esteemed among Catholics,) and is, that we are to receive from the *previous generation* all that it taught; and that, too, be it well observed, IN THE DEVELOPED FORM *in which they deliver it to us*. On this subject he has written an able chapter, (23,) to which I may refer my readers. In it he says, "Fitting it is, therefore, that the understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, as well of every man in particular, as of all in common; as well of one alone, as of the whole in general, should, by the advance of ages, *abundantly increase and go forward*."—Page 104. A little further on he compares this development of religion to that of the human body, which while it preserves its main outlines, limbs, and proportions, develops itself into greater size.

I will bring forward two passages out of his treatise against heresy, to show more clearly that his meaning is what I have stated. In speaking of the text, 1 Tim. vi. 20. which he renders, "Oh Timothy, keep the *depositum*, avoiding profane novelties of voices," he says, "Who at this day is *Timothy*? but either the whole Church, or especially the whole body of Prelates, who ought either themselves to have a sound knowledge of divine religion, or who ought to infuse it into others. What is meant by keep the *depositum*? Keep it for fear of

thieves.....What is meant by this *depositum*? That is, that which is committed to thee, not that which is invented of thee; that which thou hast received, not that which thou hast devised; a thing not of wit, but of learning; not of private assumption, but of public tradition: a thing brought to thee, not brought forth of thee; wherein thou must not be an author, but a keeper; not a founder, but an observer; not a leader, but a follower. ‘Keep the depositum,’ quoth he. Preserve the talent of the Catholic Faith safe and undiminished; that which is committed to thee, let that remain with thee, and that deliver.” — Com. p. 100. Surely nothing can be more opposite to this Author’s meaning than to say that the existing ecclesiastical tradition may be tested by private appeal to the records of primitive times, to ascertain which of it is to be received and which is not; but that we ought to receive whole and entire all the tradition that came from the last generation. This he asserts more expressly in another passage, where, speaking of pope Stephen, he says, “That holy and prudent man knew well, that the nature of piety would admit nothing else but only *to deliver to our children all things with the same fidelity with which we received them of our forefathers.*” — Page 26. It will not be pretended that the Reformers did this, or professed to do so.

It appears then, that so far from St. Vincent

asserting that appeal might be made *from* the generation immediately preceding to more remote ones, he, on the contrary says that the generation of our immediate ancestors is that *to* which we are to appeal, and to use *their* voice and testimony as a prescription against any novelty that may spring up in our own day. Just as at the council of Nicæa; what the Fathers there assembled declared, was not their private opinion upon the text of Scripture, or of the Apostolic Fathers, though this they may have done incidentally; the great question with them was, “what was the doctrine that had been taught in their diocese and delivered to them by the generation before them.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED AND FINISHED.—THE CASE OF GENERAL COUNCILS CONSIDERED.—PRACTICAL STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC RULE OF FAITH—RECAPITULATION.

IN the preceding chapter it is shown that the Catholic rule of faith does not allow of deciding the question as to the certainty of a tradition being a doctrine of the Church, by examining the documents of earlier ages, and endeavouring

to trace it to the times of the Apostles. In fact, it is seen by many of the Anglicans that such a proceeding would involve private judgment, just in the same way that an endeavour to test doctrine by Scripture would, and that it does not differ from it in principle. Accordingly another supposition has its maintainers among them: there are some who say that any thing that has been decreed by a council must be received as certain, that is, believed; while any thing that has not been formally decreed, is uncertain, and therefore we need not believe it.

Now any Catholic will fully admit that what has come down to us, as decreed by a council consisting of the proper authorities, must be held implicitly or explicitly; but we know of no reason why our faith should be *limited* to decrees of councils. What has been formally decreed by council is *necessary* to be held, but this is not the same thing as to say that it is *sufficient*. It is very possible that there may be heretics who yet do not deny any thing that has ever been decreed by council. If the denial of things that have been thus decreed, formed the real distinction between a heretic and a believer, there could have been no such thing as a heretic for some three centuries; whereas they were as numerous then as ever. Indeed, if we are to receive an ecclesiastical doctrine, it is evident that we must do so quite independently of the *history* of that doctrine; I mean, independently of any

attacks that have been made upon it in its passage down to our own times; we must receive those that have *not* been attacked, as well as those that have.

That this is the case, will appear more evidently by bearing in mind what it is that Catholic Councils assemble for. Now it is manifest that the object of a council is not to decide whether an existing doctrine or tradition of the Church is to be received or not; *this* is what the synods of heretics do; it is to declare with greater clearness and to define *what it is* that they have received from the generation before them; to *witness for* the doctrine delivered by their fathers, not to test or prove it. It may sometimes happen that it is doubtful what an ecclesiastical tradition is, or what form it is to be expressed in; and when this doubt is such as to cause any distraction in the Church, or any danger to the faith, a council is assembled, which declares and defines what before was doubtful. In this case only, can any thing be made binding by the decrees of a council, when previously to the assembling of the council it was doubtful, but became defined and made clear by the decrees then passed, and when particular modes of expressing it have been decided upon. Thus, at the council of Nicea, a decision was made as to what particular expressions were to be used in speaking of the divinity of our blessed Lord; and a person who refused to

make use of them after the decree of the council, has ever been treated as a heretic ; though he would not have been before, at least not for merely rejecting a certain phrase.

It may, however, so happen, that certain truths may be well known and universally received *without* a council ; just as it appears that an undefined belief in the divinity of our Lord was before the time of Arius, whose error made it necessary that it should be determined what modes of speaking amounted to a denial of it. Now, obviously, any thing of this sort, any thing that is which is universally received in the Church, *ought* to be received, and an individual is wrong in rejecting it. A council does not *make* a thing the voice of the Church, it does but define the voice of the Church, when before it was doubtful. It is quite contrary to Catholic principle for an individual to reject teaching that universally prevails in the Church, whether it has been decreed by council or not. What is not doubted by the mass, the individual has no right to doubt ; if he does, he is no true disciple of the Church. What is popularly received and taught by the priests as Church doctrine, the individual must not reject.

Here, then, we are prepared for a more precise and practical statement of the Catholic principle in regard to belief. Whatever is undoubted in the Catholic communion, must be held as un-

doubted by all its disciples, and that whether it has ever been decreed by council or not. Now, by the very force of the word, a thing is *doubtful* when men actually do doubt about it—that is, when contrary things are said of it. Thus, in cases where some say one thing and some another, it may be doubtful which of the two parties hold the true ecclesiastical tradition; and in such a case as this it may sometimes be allowable for the individual to suspend his judgment upon the matter. It must be observed, however, that a thing *may* be an ecclesiastical tradition, even when people are not unanimous about it, and that it *must* be when they are unanimous in declaring it to be so. And again, when we speak of men saying different things about it, we mean, not all men, but those that are in the Church, in that one “communion,” in fact, which is spoken of in the Apostles’ Creed. If the persons of any particular district cut themselves off from this communion, which is more or less thickly spread through all the world, we do not consider that to make a tradition doubtful, else, if it did, there would be nothing but what would be doubted.

Here the question will arise; “How am I to know,” a person may ask, “that people in the Catholic communion, all through the world, *are* unanimous about a given doctrine that is proposed?” In answer to this, it is evident that it is quite time enough to consider them to be not

unanimous when we actually find them not to be so. Until a person actually hears different things said about it, he has no right to suppose that different things *are* said. Whatever he hears taught as the doctrine of his communion, he believes to be such until he hears the contrary taught. Certainly not until this takes place, has the individual any right to doubt of the teaching that he hears. When all that he hears bears one way, he must go with it.

A Catholic will not limit his belief to matters that have been decreed by councils. He is not supposed to know anything at all about councils; and perhaps taking the Catholics one with another all through the world, nine out of ten do not. And who is there even of those who do, that can say with certainty every thing that has been decreed by councils from the beginning? No. A Catholic will consider himself bound to believe all that he hears taught as the doctrine of his communion until he hears it contradicted, not by *any* one, but by those in his own communion: and *then* perhaps the thing will need further consideration, otherwise all that is taught him is *to him* matter of faith.

We shall see now more plainly what is meant by going by the authority of the Church. *To go by the authority of the Church, is to go by the word of those whom she has authorized to teach us. Every thing that a Catholic hears taught as the doctrine of the Church by those whom the*

Church has authorized as our teachers, is to him matter of faith, until he hears it contradicted in his own communion. What all the authorized teachers of the Church are unanimous in declaring as its doctrine, a man is heretic for rejecting; and he has no right to suspect want of unanimity until he actually finds it exist: if he does he is a heretic. If the voice of all who speak to him in the name of the Church, be they many or be they few, yes, if it is only the single voice of his own director, having never heard those of his communion teach the contrary, he would be in reality rejecting the voice of the Church, and would be heretical.

It may here be not out of place to say a few words upon cases in which, if such exist, the authorities are *not* unanimous. Happily this is, as far as I know, at present a purely hypothetical case; I am not aware that our authorities either do or are even accused by their enemies of putting forward contradictory statements of what the doctrine of the Church is; they may indeed differ in minor matters, but not in things which they teach *as doctrines of the Church*. Such matters are comparatively unimportant; and at all events a person is not a heretic whichever he sides with. The only consideration then is in the supposed case of their giving a different account of the *doctrine of the Church*. What is to be done in such a case by the individual? That is, what has always been the Catholic way

of proceeding in such cases? It has been to consult *other living authorities*. Thus, if a Catholic were to hear two priests give a different account of Church doctrine, he would not settle the question by consulting the records of ages long past, but by asking a third priest, and for greater confirmation he might ask several more, and perhaps his bishop. An individual always has the privilege of appeal to other and higher authorities where he finds his own immediate teachers not unanimous; and in extreme cases he may appeal to the highest authority—to him who is the shepherd of the shepherds, and had authority given him not only to feed the lambs but the sheep also.

A Catholic then will receive as good and true whatever the existing authorities of the Church teach to be so. He will have confidence that it never can happen that a whole existing generation of those of his communion can witness in favour of anything that is untrue or evil; such an idea is a most revolting one, one from which the affections and understanding will alike recoil. He will feel that though such and such a vice may be far from uncommon in places, yet that nothing that is really a vice can receive the sanction of all the authorities and all the holy and self-denying men of his Church; and hence he will accept unreservedly, not only doctrine formally defined by councils, but all doctrine whatever which he finds publicly taught by the

authorities of the Church ; he will throw himself into the received system which he finds existing, and as far as he seeks for perfection, will do so in it, and through it, and according to the model which it exhibits and prescribes ; he will not stumble at anything from hearing it abused by those that are without ; it is enough for him if it is sanctioned by the authorities of the Church, and by the example of her saints. Among such practices there is one which I might name, both by way of illustration and because of its own vast importance, and as being a thing the observance of which any Catholic will be truly glad to be in any way the means of promoting—I mean the honour shown to the blessed Virgin. Even if his own experience of the benefits and pleasure of honouring her were wanting, (to suppose such a case possible,) yet when he saw all others doing so he would believe in the goodness of the practice. And still more when he found that the more eminent men were for sanctity in other respects, the more devout they were to our Lady; the more holy and unearthly their minds, the more does it delight them to dwell upon the thoughts of her ; the more their hearts are lifted up to Her Son, the more are they to her also; the more fervent are they in prayer to God, the more ardent is the language of their devotion to her, (and surely, glowing as their language may sometimes seem, it is far from being an expression of the full state of their feelings) surely on

seeing this, the force of the example of such men, who one and all are remarkable for their devotion to the ever blessed Mother of God, will be sufficient to induce not only any Catholic, but any Catholic-minded person to feel it likewise. If we were to ask a Catholic why he invokes the blessed Virgin, he might perhaps say, because it is the practise of the Church. This, however, would be to give but a very imperfect account of the matter: doubtless it was this that made him begin it, yet having once begun it with anything approaching to a proper spirit, he will feel to need no further authority; to attempt to persuade him that the benefits he experiences are unreal, or that the mysterious connection which he feels to subsist between her whom he loves and honours and invokes, and his own soul, is a mere phantasy, would be almost the same thing as telling him that his very existence is a dream.

To sum up what has been said; the Catholic principle may be said to consist in the unsuspecting reception of the existing tradition of the Church, without endeavouring first to trace it by reference to antiquity; and not only this, but the accepting *as* this tradition the word of those who in the name of the Church tell us that it is so, while we have not heard any thing from the members of our own communion to the contrary. Or, in other words, the rule of faith is to go by the authority of the *existing Church*, which can only be done by accepting as the teaching of the

Church that which its authorized teachers propose to us as such. He who acts otherwise, is no Catholic. And it would seem that this, and this only, at all comes up to the idea of receiving the kingdom of heaven as a little child, to take as the teaching of the Church and as truth, that which is declared to be so even by one single authorized teacher, until we have heard others of our own communion say differently.

This exposition of the Catholic principle will, of course, seem very repugnant to Protestants' notion of private search; yet they may rest quite assured that there is a strong resemblance between it and the way in which their own teachers would have them act; because, in fact, it is so natural a way of acting, that there seems to be hardly any escape from it in one form or other; it seems to pursue us even though we fly from it. There is no Protestant teacher whatever, but what would wish his learners to accept as truth all that he teaches them as such, at all events until they hear to the contrary; and this is a kind of inconsistent attempt at Catholicism. Thus far, then, the two agree; but where they diverge into opposite principles is in that the Protestant will think himself at liberty to differ from his teacher, *not because he hears other teachers differ*, but because he forms a different opinion to his teacher as to the contents of certain written records, which he thinks himself at liberty to put his own construction upon, even if

it is contrary to the voice of all the teachers in the world.* To *him*, other teachers are nothing; to the Catholic they are every thing; it is they alone who guide and influence his belief, which is independent of judgment upon the contents of written records; what he hears taught by the teachers of his communion he will receive as truth, until he hears of a difference of opinion relating to it between these teachers; *then*, perhaps, there may, in some cases, be need of further enquiry; but *until* he hears of a difference amongst them, he will rely upon the truth of what he hears.

In this reliance, then, objections that are made to particular doctrines, will not move a Catholic; he will be prepared to hear them and to answer them; though not perhaps with any direct answer from antiquity. Objections drawn either from the Scripture or from the Fathers, will have no weight with him; for he will know that however specious or forcible they may seem, they cannot be real and valid. He will remember that strange indeed would it be if a skilful adversary could not, out of so large a mass of writings, bring forward a great deal that would perplex an ordinary person, were he once to listen to them. The scene that took place in the wilderness during our Lord's temptation, will remind him that even Scripture may be

* Of this kind were the proceedings of Luther, for instance, as well as other leaders of heresy.

quoted against him, and if he attempts to answer out of it, it will be rather to silence his adversary than from any feeling that his position is insecure if he is not able to do so. He will be prepared to hear both facts and statements brought forward which might seem irreconcilable with modern doctrine, yet he will not doubt that they are capable of a satisfactory answer, even if *he* is not able to give one. He will feel quite confident that existing doctrine is identical with that of the Fathers, and has always been the same, whatever objections may be made; and that to depart even in the smallest matter from the tradition of the Church, would involve a total change of principle.

From this it will follow that the very idea of *a reformation of received doctrine is nothing less than a departure from the faith*; an exchange of belief for mere opinion. So that to call upon Catholics to reform the doctrines received among them, would involve a much deeper and more momentous change than is at first sight evident. It would involve not only a change of faith, but a change of the *Rule of faith*; not only a change of doctrine, but a change of principle, a departure from those principles upon which Catholics have always acted. The only reformation that can be made among Catholics without their ceasing to be Catholics, is, not the alteration of doctrine popularly taught by the authorities as Church

doctrine, but of doctrine which is *not* so taught; of doctrine which is the doctrine of the few, not of the many. It is the bringing of the doctrine of the minority into harmony and unison with that of the majority; the reducing the aberrations of individuals to the popularly received standard of doctrine. Or again, it is not the alteration of popular doctrine, but the putting forth of more precise and definite forms in which it is to be for the future taught, and this for a purpose just the reverse of making any alteration, namely, the securing of its identity. This and this alone, is a Catholic Reform; this is the kind of Reform which Catholic councils have been summoned to effect, whose object has always been to *ensure a continuance of*, not to change, the doctrine that has come down to their times. St. Vincent of Lerins says of councils, "What hath she [the Church] else at any time endeavoured by the decrees of councils, but that what was before simply credited, the same afterward should be more diligently believed; that what before was taught with less pains, the same afterward should be preached more instantly; that what before was more securely [i. e. with less care] revered, the same afterward should more carefully be cherished." Com. p. 110. In this we see the difference between a Catholic reformation, and the so-called one originated by Luther, who did not doubt that what he denied was the received doctrine

of the day; and it was this that made him a heretic.

All Protestants, moreover, agree with us in teaching that the doctrine which ought to be followed is that of the early Church; they are not indeed agreed among themselves as to *how long* the Church remained a trustworthy guide; the majority of them thinking that it ceased to be so after the first century; others of them add two or three centuries more. There is no difference then between ourselves and them as to whether the early Church ought to be followed; we both of us agree that its doctrines are true; the only thing about which we differ is, as to *how these doctrines are to be ascertained*. We hold that the *traditional account of them* which has come down to our times is to be received; they, on the other hand, think that individuals may examine for themselves; not all individuals indeed, for all have not the power of doing so; but only *certain* individuals. And this is the sole origin of the existing differences between Catholics and Protestants. It originated in individual attempts to ascertain the sense of antiquity by consulting ancient records, rather than keeping to the received account of the matter that had come down to their times. No other account of the difference but this is ever pretended to be given. Protestants fully admit that at the time of the Reformation there was but one received system of doctrine in the com-

munity out of which they sprung. If any one were to ask a Protestant to account for the difference, he would give no other account than this; that part of the received system of the day seemed to some of the learned men of the day not to agree with antiquity, and consequently was altered according to the best of the judgment of those who had consulted ancient records. No one will doubt that this is the origin of the difference between the Catholic Church and all who broke off from its communion, whether Anglicans or any others. All the Reformers without exception denied some one part at least of the system which they had received; some denied one part of it and some another. One part which they have all given up is the Papal supremacy. Another thing which I may safely say they all gave up is the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation; which was a doctrine not only universally received in the community to which they belonged, but had been defined by a council of that body. And so again they denied what they called the "Romish doctrine of Purgatory," &c. By this, however, we need not suppose them to have denied all idea of Purgatory whatever, but only that which was taught in the Roman communion. Elsewhere in the Articles of the Church of England, they speak of the *Church of Rome having erred in matters of faith*. Whether or not this *may*, as far as the grammatical sense goes, be under-

stood merely of the local diocese of the Pope, yet it is quite plain that the Reformers never meant to draw any distinction between the actual diocese of Rome and the neighbouring ones in communion with it. No Protestant has ever imputed any error to that particular diocese which he did not impute to all in communion with it; so that in protesting against any thing taught in the diocese of Rome, they protest against the doctrine of the whole Roman obedience. The Reformers, and all who have followed in their wake, meant to protest as much against the "errors" of Gardiner and Bonner, as of those in the actual city of Rome. So that, however much those bodies who broke off from the Catholic Church at the Reformation, may dispute with us as to which party* represents truly the doctrines of the first three centuries, there is no dispute as to which of us *represents the doctrines received immediately before the Reformation*; the very name of Protestant, so commonly used among all these communities, is a witness that it is they who rejected what was then held.

The line of acting that the Reformers introduced, they have also bound all those to, who follow in the movement which they originated. In reformed bodies private search is unavoidable. There are, indeed, a great many persons among them who strongly disapprove of the

* Catholics or Protestants.

principle : yet what are they to do ? how else is a person to see his way in the unheard-of confusion that at this moment prevails in the Anglican Church, for instance ? The able men among them are driven, in spite of themselves, to look into the Fathers to endeavour to make a clearer way than there is at present ; and why have they not as much right to do so as the Reformers ? “ *Idem licet Valentinianis ac Valentino,*” says Tertullian ; what Valentinus might do, the Valentinians may do also.

There is such an entire want of uniformity in Anglican teaching, that it is quite impossible to ascertain what the teaching of the Established Church is ; and that for the very reason that there is no one uniform system to be ascertained. In spite of all the articles and formularies that have been drawn up, there is every variety of opinion as to what the doctrines of the Anglican communion really are. The whole question as to an ecclesiastical system in all its variety of details, is confidently maintained by one party to be the doctrine of the Church of England ; and by another it is with equal confidence declared to be not so. The articles are appealed to ; but then the vagueness and uncertainty of their meaning is becoming more and more evident. Each party says that they *may* mean the same thing that he does ; while, as Mr. Ward has shown, *no* person who thinks, be he of whatever party he may, can subscribe to them

without feeling that he is doing much violence to the natural sense of them. In fact, in a community where there is no uniformly pervading way of thinking, no practical uniformity among its members, who are divided into large parties with every variety of opinion and sympathy—where there is no one definite system of dogmatic teaching enforced—where men may, and do, preach almost anything they please with impunity, and generally even without reproof, it will become impossible to fix upon any system as being the system of that body. Without a uniform oral dogmatic teaching, the meaning of formularies and articles becomes as much mere matter of opinion as does private judgment passed upon any other document.

1* In the uncertainty, then, which prevails both as to what is the actual teaching of the Established Church, and as to the meaning of its formularies, what is an Anglican to do—where is he to turn for guidance? It seems natural for him to *begin* by doing as has been usually done in his own communion, by resorting to some form of private judgment. Thus he will look either to the Bible or to the Fathers; and through charitable feeling will be predisposed to think that Anglicans agree with antiquity, and thus that the meaning of his Church's teaching may be elicited and made clearer by looking to antiquity. Yet, does not all antiquity refer us away from itself to some *living* guide? Does it

not seem to have been quite a first principle with the ancients that some such living guide is always to be found on earth? Even the formularies of the Church of England seem to recognize the existence of such. They say that *the Church* has authority in controversies of faith. This is a doctrine which all Anglican clergy subscribe to; yet what a strange inconsistency is this; for them to make such a declaration as this, and yet knowingly to go contrary to what, to say the very least, is the great majority of Christendom — the Roman Catholic communion, which is said to number in its pale more than 150 millions of persons: a larger number than all sects put together. The Church of England is but a small body — not a fiftieth part of the whole number of those who call themselves Christians. This body is confessedly peculiar in its doctrines; so far, at least, that in some point or other it differs from every one else. The Church, be it observed, is by them rightly said to be a *congregation*; and they say, therefore, that some *congregation* has authority in matters of faith. What an unaccountable proceeding it is, then, in their clergy to profess to grant that the *Church* has authority in matters of faith, and yet knowingly to teach doctrine which is contrary to what, even according to their own account of the matter, is the great body of the Church. It is true that this has been done for the most part inconsiderately;

the principle of Church authority, though solemnly maintained by them at their ordination, has, in fact, received but very little consideration among them until very lately; and this, indeed, must be their excuse, as far as they can have any: but now that attention is being so generally turned to the subject of Church authority, and now that people are being surprised at the number of their clergy who are leaving them, they will before long attend to the matter themselves, and consider whether Church authority is not something real, and something which must be followed; and in regard to such of their clergy as yet remain, they will surely before long either make them act upon their professed principle, or else renounce it. The Church of England can never succeed in claiming authority over its members, either as long as it is so divided in itself, or as long as it, a small local body, refuses to submit itself to the authority of the universal Church. I question not but that this is one thing that makes the idea of Church authority so unpopular amongst many of them—not so much from any absolute hatred of authority, as from feeling that it is an absurdity for a body to claim it when they have themselves cast off the authority they were once under. They feel that if there is, what is strictly and properly speaking, any authority at all, it is the Church universal, not a mere local society which has broken off from it.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEFINITION OF HERESY, AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE
PRESENT STATE OF THINGS.

In order to understand more clearly the relative position of parties, it will be necessary to enquire, not only what is faith, but also what is heresy, which, in a certain sense, is the opposite of faith. All persons have some general notion of heresy as being a wilful departure from the truth; and know also that the term has generally been in some way connected with departure from Church authority: yet some precise description of it is needed. The Catholic notion of it has been given in the preceding chapters; and, therefore, I would not trouble my readers with anything further upon the matter, but that, since the first outline of this paper was drawn up, I have met with, though not in print, a definition of heresy which is so good a one, and so suitable to the present times, that it may be worth while to say a few words upon it. A variety of definitions and descriptions of the heretical spirit have been given—such as, that it is the devising or following new opinions for the sake of some temporal advantage, chiefly for vain glory; or, again, it has been said that it is always accompanied by a certain disin-

genuous manner of proceeding, which may show itself in a variety of ways—as, for instance, in signing documents or declarations, when they are of such a nature that the natural sense of the language must be done violence to in order to bring it into harmony with the feelings of the person subscribing to it.

All these, however, may be passed over. But before coming to the one in question, an important position must be noticed: it has always been held by Catholics that a person who denies pertinaciously any one point of faith, as is the case with heretics, *has no faith at all*, even though he holds a great deal of truth. The reason of this seems to be twofold: First, because the obstinate rejection of any one article of faith implies the rejection of authority, in that faith is built upon authority, and when a person has rejected the authority upon which faith is built, he cannot of course have any faith, but merely opinions. Another reason seems to be, because there is such an intimate connexion between all the different articles of faith, that it is impossible to reject any one of them without putting a different sense to the true one, even upon those in which he agrees, though his *language* about them may be perfectly correct, and he may be quite unconscious of differing from Catholics in such points.

A few illustrations from Scripture may here be of service. Our Saviour Himself says, “He

that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father;" and to Philip, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father;" and he elsewhere says, "If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also, and he that hateth not Me, hateth not My Father also." And St. John says, "Whoso denieth the Son, hath not the Father." Elsewhere he says, "He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son;" and in another place, that the doctrine of Antichrist will be to deny the Son. So that denying the Son and denying both the Son and the Father are identical. Again, in speaking of another article of faith, the resurrection of the body, St. Paul says, "If the dead are not raised, *then is Christ not raised: your faith is vain.*" (1 Cor. xvi. 16, 17.) So that he connects our own resurrection with that of Christ, and says, that to deny the one is to deny the other, and makes our faith vain, or unreal faith, if we may so interpret it. And again, in regard to the article relating to believing the Catholic Church, our Lord says, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me." (Matt. x. 40.) And when He says to the Apostles, "As My Father sent Me, *even so send I you.*" (John xx. 21.) Does not a misapprehension of the way in which the *Church* is commissioned, imply also a misapprehension of the way in which the Son Himself is sent? Or, when St. John gives two tests for discerning a

spirit of truth from a spirit of error, he does not say, that which you think you find in the Scriptures is true, but, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." (1 John iv. 2.) This he proposes as the mark of Antichrist, and of the two tests of error; the second test of error is the hearing *us*—some visible authority, that is; "he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us." (1 John iv. 6.) So that he evidently makes the anti-ecclesiastical and the anti-christian spirit identical; as if being in error about the Church must also involve error about the Head of it.

In speaking of this subject, St. Thomas Aquinas says, "In a heretic, who disbelieves any one article of faith, there is no longer any faith at all, either formed or unformed...whoever does not abide by, as a divine and infallible rule, the authority of the Church, which proceeds from the sovereign source of Truth as manifested in the Holy Scriptures, *has not the habit of faith*, but as far as he holds those things which are matters of faith, *he* holds them in some other way than by faith; just as if any one were to hold some conclusion in his mind, not knowing the medium by which it has been arrived at, it is plain that he cannot be said to have *knowledge* of it, but only an opinion about it. Now it is manifest that any one who adheres to the doctrine of the Church as an infallible rule, assents

to every thing which the Church teaches. But *if out of the doctrines of the Church he makes an arbitrary selection of some and a rejection of others*, he does not adhere to the doctrine of the Church, but goes by his own will. And thus it is plain that any one who pertinaciously discredits any one article of faith, is not prepared to follow the doctrine of the Church in all things. Wherefore it is manifest that such a person who is heretical in any one point of faith, has no faith at all, even in the other articles, *but only an opinion*. In fact, to hear of the '*faith of a heretic*' would be something altogether new; it would be quite a new mode of speech—new even among heretics themselves; so that, however unwilling we may be to deny that those who wilfully reject any one article of faith, have any faith at all, yet such certainly is the case, and every body allows it to be so." *Secunda Secundæ*, qu. 5. art. 3.

This passage of St. Thomas will put us into a condition for understanding the definition of heresy which I purpose to treat of, and which is that of a member of the English Church. The author of it defines the heretical spirit thus: it "is to take or leave, as it pleases, what is proposed to it on the same authority." This definition, though somewhat an obscure one, is, if understood in the only sense in which it is capable of any meaning at all, an excellent one, and one which is very much to our purpose. We see that it agrees with what St. Thomas says, that

the heretical spirit makes arbitrary selections of some things, and a rejection of others. The obscurity of it lies in the use of the expression, "the same authority." The definition cannot mean, "that a heretic is one who acknowledges an authority, and yet makes an arbitrary selection and rejection of what this authority teaches," because this is a thing that *never is done*; in fact, it would imply a contradiction of terms. No heretic makes an arbitrary selection out of the teaching of what he receives as an authority; on the contrary, it is only when he *ceases* to receive it as an authority, that he makes his selection. And though the selection which a heretic makes is called an *arbitrary* one, yet it must be particularly observed, that though arbitrary it is not *random*; it is always made upon some principle. The heretic always employs some *test* with which to compare the doctrine of what he had hitherto received as an authority, and rejects or receives such parts of it as appear to agree with the test that he has assumed. This test is for the most part the Bible, though not always. The most usual case of heresy then is when the system proposed by the existing Church is examined by the standard of the Scripture, as interpreted by the individual; and when those parts of the system proposed to him by the Church are selected and retained which appear to him to agree with the test which he uses to examine them by; which test is most commonly the Scripture, though

sometimes other writings are taken into account as well. This law the heretic considers as his ultimate appeal or test ; and it must be borne in mind that *no* heretic makes arbitrary selections out of the ultimate court of appeal which he looks to in the place of an authority—if he did this, we should call him more than a heretic, he would be a complete infidel. So that when we speak of the heretical spirit being that which takes or leaves, as it pleases, what is proposed to it on the *same* authority, we cannot mean that it rejects what is proposed to it on the *same* authority *as that upon which it receives what it does receive*, for such a case does not exist ; the very idea of going by authority implies the reception of *all* that the authority teaches, as far as he knows what it does teach ; if a person rejects part, he receives those things in which he does agree with it, not *upon* that authority, as St. Thomas says, but in some other way. The authority out of which heretics make an arbitrary selection, is, not that which they take for their ultimate test, but the teaching of the Church. And it is this that makes them heretics. In fact, what makes them heretics is the *turning away from one authority to follow another*, or rather another which they take for an authority. This is what all heretics do ; it is true that in deserting the authority of the Church in their day, they think they are following some other authority. Now it is manifest that according to

the notion of authority given above, viz. that it is that which we are bound to follow, and which God will hold us responsible for not following, that it would be a simple contradiction of terms to say that there is more than *one* authority in the world. There cannot, by the very force of the terms, be two independent authorities, A and B, speaking different things ; for if A is an authority I am bound to listen to it, and I can only go over to B, who says something different, when A *ceases* to be an authority. To speak, then, of leaving one who is really an authority, that is one whom you are bound to obey, to follow *another* whom you are bound to obey, is unmeaning. The first must *cease to be an authority*, or else the second cannot become so. There is no such a thing as turning away from one authority in religion and putting ourselves under another, unless the former *ceases* to be an authority, and the second takes its place. So that it appears unmeaning and contradictory for a Protestant to say that the Reformers turned away from one authority at the Reformation to follow another ; for, if they were under an authority before the Reformation, that authority was the existing Church ; and if it was an authority, it was, by the idea of religious authority, that which God bound them to ; and unless He absolved them from this authority, and appointed some other which *till then* had not been an authority, they are, by rejecting what they hitherto were in alle-

giance to as an authority, rejecting all authority whatever.*

Since then if a person is under a real authority, and *turns away from it*, no matter what he may afterwards attempt to follow, he is in reality departing from authority altogether, it follows that the only sense in which the definition we have been examining, can have any truth, or indeed any meaning at all, is that which coincides with what St. Thomas says; and is the rejecting arbitrarily what is proposed to us by the same authority, in the *same* which we have been in the habit of following—of course it presupposes that it is a *real* authority out of which the selection is made. Here it may be in place to observe, that to speak of *an* authority in matters of religion, is an inadequate expression; we should more correctly speak of *the* authority, in that there can be but one whom God requires us to follow. Nothing else can be an authority, except as far as it is a representative of this one authority, through the testimony of which, and

* There can only be two authorities in the case, where the following the one is the same thing as following the other; in this case, however, there are not really two authorities, but only one, which speaks to us by a different organ, and in this sense the Scriptures and the Church may be called two authorities; if cases, however, when the following of one can only take place through a rejection of the other, there can be only one. There can only be two authorities in the case, where the rejection of the one involves rejection of the other; here, however, they are virtually but one.

as being the representative of which, it can alone be authoritative.

If now it were asked, what is the origin of the differences between the Church of Rome and the Established Church, the following answer would be given: that the Reformers detected corruptions in the existing system, and therefore reformed it to the best of their power; and that though they certainly ceased to follow the authority which had hitherto guided them, yet that they by no means intended to cast off all authority; they did but change it, and henceforth went by the authority of the Scriptures or the Fathers, as the case might be; and that they ascertained the meaning of these writings to the best of their judgment; they *did* however cast off all authority, though doubtless they did not *intend* to do so; it is true that they only meant to change it; but for *man* to speak of changing the authority he is under, is utterly to mistake the nature of religious authority. It is not the *followers* of an authority, but the author of it, who alone can change it and put us under another.

Here, then, is exactly a case in point: The Reformers, whether in England or elsewhere, made a selection out of the system which was proposed to them, and retained such of it and such only, as appeared to them to agree with the test which they assumed. And this is neither more nor less than what heretics have done in

all ages, and what makes the modern Reformers heretics.

The modern Roman Catholic system is that which was proposed to the Reformers by the generation which preceded them; and they rejected part of it; the doctrine, for instance, of Papal supremacy, and others. The existing Church was the authority which up to the time of the Reformation the Reformers themselves had recognised; and even in the formulary which they drew up they still retained, though inconsistently enough, the doctrine that the Church, that is the congregation of faithful men, i. e. an *existing Church, had authority in controversies of faith!* Of course they conceived that they had a good reason for rejecting those parts of the system which was proposed to them; and *also* conceived that they were adopting all that was to be found in the test which they adopted; so however, does every heretic. Arius, Pelagius, and all others who have rejected part of the authority proposed to them, still fancied that they were receiving the whole of what was contained in the writings by which they tested the system proposed to them.

The case of the Church of England, then, is nothing more than the ordinary case of heresy, as Catholics have all along said: Anglicans rejected part of the system proposed to them, not of course without thinking that they had a reason for so doing, such as that the part they gave up

did not agree with what they supposed to be the meaning of certain written documents by which they endeavoured to test the truth of what they had received. I would impute to no heretic whatever, a wilful rejection of any of the doctrines contained in the writings he professes to go by ; only that in rejecting part of the system proposed by the existing Church of their day, the Reformers did in reality reject what was taught by the early Church also. This, indeed, is what they will question: they *cannot*, however, question that they gave up part of the system that was proposed to them by the authority they had been in the habit of following, and this, *whatever* may have been their reason for so doing, is what constituted the Reformers heretics, according to the definition, a true one ; for if we were to say simply that the hæreticus animus consisted in making an arbitrary choice what to accept and what to reject of those things which were supposed to be contained in the *ultimate test* they appeal to, the hæreticus animus would not exist at all ; for *no* one rejects and chooses like this : it does not consist in the wilfully drawing up a false system, but in the rejection of part of that which is proposed by the living voice, the existing tradition of the day.

The English Reformers, then, as well as the others, laid themselves open to the charge which Mr. Newman makes against those who “put themselves above existing systems” as being

“supercilious and proud;” for this the Reformers unquestionably did; they seem not to have recognized the duty of accepting the existing system of their day, whole and entire as they found it, but to have sifted and examined it and tested it by some other standard, rejecting those parts of it in which, *according to their private judgment*, it did not seem to agree with their test. And for this, until very lately, they have been universally applauded among all the Reformed; not indeed that all men have agreed with their conclusions, any more than they agreed among themselves; but their way of proceeding was for a long time approved of by all, and continued to be so until after a long trial it was found to lead to such interminable disputes and difficulties, that the more thoughtful and pious men in the Anglican communion have begun to more than suspect the soundness of the principle.

After a long trial of three centuries, it has been found that the principle of private judgment in whatever shape, is utterly inadequate to lead men to that unity of faith which is the characteristic of true christianity, and that too under circumstances where it has had the very best opportunity, such as in the Established Church; where every means have been devised to secure unanimity, but with an utter want of success. Articles are drawn up, which all who enter the Anglican ministry have to subscribe

several times in the course of their lives. Articles to which those who subscribe are bound to do so not according to any meaning they may choose to put upon them, but in their grammatical sense; and as if that were not stringent enough, they are besides forbidden to subscribe them in any *new* sense. Yet what ministry in the world is so divided as the Anglican? We cannot go into any town in England where a very large portion of those who belong to the Established Church, do not go so far as even to say that their minister does not preach the Gospel! Nor is this state of things to be at all wondered at. It is contrary to human nature to think that men will for long remain without finding fault with those who scrupled not to find fault with those who taught *them*, when they had no means of information open to them which was not also open to those whom they found fault with. The consequence has been, that a state of things has arisen in which every thing seems to be considered as an uncertainty; it has become necessary "to direct" men "towards articles of faith which should be their place of starting, and to treat as mere conclusions what in other ages were treated as first principles."—Newm. Lect. p. 1. A state "in which all notions, moral and religious, are so unsettled, that every positive truth must be a gain."—Ibid. p. 15. A state in which, as the same writer says, "we, or those before us, have asserted our

right of debating every truth, however sacred, however protected from scrutiny hitherto," which is not only to profess oneself a heretic, but, as Mr. Palmer goes on to say, is to advocate the very principle of heresy.*

What, then, is to be done by one who finds himself in a system in which there is such unprecedented difference of opinion; in which he finds so many schools and parties, each saying the most opposite things, and putting them forward as the teaching of their communion? Obviously *one* way of proceeding will be to claim the right of search for oneself, to endeavour to ascertain by one's own judgment which or whether any of the contending parties has the real christian system. It is the great difference of teaching which exists in the Established Church, rather than any inveterate love of heresy, that makes many act upon the heretical

* Aids to reflection on the seemingly double character of the Established Church. He says, "The Lutherans and Calvinists, and all the sects which have been derived from them, both among themselves and elsewhere, maintain publicly as the *foundation* of their 'Reformation' or 'Protestantism,' or Evangelical Christianity, not so much any particular or accidental heresy, (though they have several,) as heresy itself made into a principle; not so much any particular false doctrine which implies an act of *alignors* in themselves or their ancestors, as the principle of *alignors* itself." p. 39. Of course these excellent remarks are applicable to *all* kinds of Reformation based upon the use of private judgment; that based upon the examination of the text of Scripture, is but a particular case of the general principle of doubting the correctness of the existing tradition, and the testing the same by looking to early writings.

principle, though they feel it to be quite repugnant to their nature, and only do so as it were in sheer self-defence, from not seeing any better way. Mr. Newman thus laments the state of affairs in which he had been brought up. "We, or our fathers before us, have contrived to make doubtful what really was certain. We have created difficulties in our path; we have gone out of our way to find ingenious objections to what was received, where none hitherto existed; as if forgetting that there is no truth so clear, no character so pure, no work of man so perfect, but it admits of criticism, and will become suspected directly it is accused. As might be expected then, we have succeeded in our attempt; we have succeeded in raising clouds which effectually hide the sun from us, and we have nothing left but to grope our way by our reason, as we best can—our necessary, because now our only guide.* And as a traveller by night, groping his way over a morass or amid pitfalls, naturally trusts himself more than his companions, though not doubting their skilfulness and goodwill, and is too intent upon his own successive steps to hear and to follow them; so we, from anxiety if not from carelessness, have straggled each from

* This strongly confirms the truth of what I have said about the impossibility of an Anglican having *faith* under the system in which he finds himself. A state in which the first principles of religion have to be proved as conclusions instead of taken as first principles, and in which men have to grope their way by reason, then necessary because now their only guide; surely both these things are quite opposite to the very idea of true faith.

his neighbour, and are all of us, or nearly so, in a fair way to lose our confidence, if not our hope.”—*Ibid.* p. 3. This striking passage well describes the feelings with which a large class of persons in the Anglican establishment, endeavour by private judgment to see their way through the surrounding darkness; a state of feeling as different from that which led the Reformers to act as they did, as it is possible to be. However much resemblance there may be in the way in which the two act, yet nothing can be greater than the circumstances and state of mind under which they did it. The Reformers inherited a united, and compact, and definite system, with parts of which they found fault, and therefore entered upon a course of action which has given rise to a state of things which even themselves surely would shrink back in terror from the sight of; while the others find themselves in the midst of darkness, and doubt, and uncertainty, and adopt the plan as an experiment—an experiment proceeding from a deep-felt desire to be set free from the unhappy state of things which the Reformers introduced. The one recklessly brought the Anglican Establishment into a complication of heresy, the other are zealously endeavouring to set it free from it.

May their pious attempts prosper; may they be entirely delivered from the heretical principle, and be the means of delivering others also. It was from a full conviction that there is no other

way of escaping entirely from heresy and so of obtaining true faith, that I took the step which I have ; and in the hope that the same considerations which have influenced myself, may have their weight with others also, I have been induced to publish them. The principle which I have recommended as the Catholic one is well known, though attention has not been much drawn to it in the Anglican communion ; nor has its real distinction from the antagonist principle been commonly a subject of discussion.

Convinced also of the necessity that we should all of us endeavour, according to our Lord's words, to receive the kingdom of heaven as little children, and feeling the utter impossibility of doing so after being cognizant of the differences of teaching which exist in the Anglican communion ; for who that remains among them can avoid under such circumstances entering into an examination for himself ; I sought refuge in that place which alone gives opportunity for receiving the kingdom of heaven as little children.

Another thing urged me forward very strongly, and seemed to me, as it does now, quite irresistible. It is the existence in the world of a large body of persons, more than 150 millions in number, calling upon all persons throughout the world to join them ; and this, too, a body whose professed way of receiving the kingdom of heaven seems so exactly to accord with that which our Lord said was the only true way—a body agree-

ing with itself in what it teaches, teaching the same things in all parts of the world, telling all indiscriminately, and without examining into their particular case, that it is necessary to join her ranks ; setting forth, too, models of holiness and perfection, which, surely, it is not too much to say are to be found nowhere else. Here is a fact for contemplation ! Let all men reflect seriously upon it—let them think well whence that voice can come, which in so authoritative a manner speaks to every'one, and that, too, quite prior to any consideration of their present position or claims, which it considers as superfluous—whence does the voice come ? Surely not from the mere surface of the earth, but from some great depth. It is no mere fancy forged in the brains of the men who give utterance to it ; the men who speak it are not the source of it, they are but the channel through which a sound not from earth reaches our ears. The very shallowest observer of things sees some deep mystery in the Roman Catholic communion. Even those unhappy persons whom that same being who persuaded the Jews of old that our Lord was Beelzebub, has persuaded that it is not the mystery of godliness but the mystery of iniquity—even these acknowledge it to be a great mystery, a mystery which is without its equal. Still, however, for the most part, these persons do not consider it an unmitigated evil ; for even the Protestants who are most hostile to it con-

fess that it is really the Church of Christ ; even those who speak against Him who we acknowledge and obey as the “ Prince of the Covenant,” (Dan. xi. 22) still confess that it is the temple of God in which He sits.

CHAPTER IX.

TWO WAYS OF JUDGING THE NATURE OF A MOVEMENT LIKE THE REFORMATION : FIRST, BY LOOKING TO THE FRUITS WHICH IT HAS PRODUCED IN THOSE WHO FOLLOWED IT ; SECONDLY, BY PUTTING OURSELVES IN A BETTER POSITION FOR JUDGING OF IT, BY INCREASING OUR OWN STRICTNESS OF LIFE.

DR. ARNOLD, in speaking of the considerations which ought to influence perplexed persons in deciding whether to follow the doctrines of believers, or the negations of unbelievers, strongly urged the necessity of following that line of teaching whose practical results were the best, and produced the best men. To say that the contrary were the case—that is, that the system which produces the best fruits is not the true one—would be, he says, to make a divorce between truth and goodness, which he rightly calls the most monstrous idea that ever entered into the human imagination. Let this idea only be

carried out and applied in its full extent, and see the result. If there were nothing else to go by, it would seem that this alone would be sufficient to decide upon the character of the Reformation. Did it bring in with it a more pure system of morals? Did it produce more goodness, more humility, more charity, more almsgiving, more of anything that is considered to be good? This is but another way of asking the question, Did it bring in greater purity of doctrine, or the reverse? The two questions are one. Truth and goodness cannot be divorced. If the Roman communion produces greater holiness than others, it cannot be itself the mystery of iniquity. To show whether a purer system of morals was not introduced by the Reformation, I need but bring forward some passages to the point, which are often quoted, not from Catholic but Protestant historians.

Luther, the father of the Reformation, says: "It is a wonderful thing and full of scandal, that from the time when the pure doctrine was first called to light, the world should daily grow worse and worse." Also he says, "The world becomes every day worse, men are now more vindictive, more avaricious, less inclined to mercy, more immodest and undisciplined, and much worse than they were in the times of the papacy." Luth. in Post. Evan. Dom. i. post Adv. And further: "Formerly, when we were seduced by the pope, men willingly followed

good works ; but now all their study is to get everything to themselves by exactions, pillage, theft, lying, usury." Luth. Sermon, in Dom. 26, post Trin.

The account which he gives of the change wrought in himself exactly corresponds with his own account of the change which the Reformation made in others. He says, "*Before I was enlightened with the knowledge of the Gospel, I was as zealous for the papistical laws and traditions of the Fathers as ever any one was, most earnestly maintaining and defending them as holy and necessary to salvation. Moreover, I endeavoured to observe and keep them myself, as much as it was possible for me to do: punishing my poor body with fasting, watching, praying, and other exercises. Whatsoever I did, I did it with a single heart, of a good zeal, and for the glory of God.*" Luth. in Gal. i. 14. Such was his character under "the papacy;" but after he commenced Reformer, he broke his vows, and describes himself as raging with the most violent concupiscence. (In colloq. mens.) His protestant biographer, who prefixed a sketch of his life to a translation of his commentary on the Galatians, though of course he praises him extravagantly, feels himself bound to add, in fairness, that, "on some occasions, the warmth of his temper betrayed him into unbecoming violence. Sometimes, also, *pride* and *excessive resentment* seem to have blended with his zeal

and magnanimity; his perseverance, too, appears occasionally to have bordered on obstinacy," of which the author gives an example when he said, "It is likewise said, that he confessed to Melancthon, that he 'had gone too far in the sacramental controversy.' Melancthon then expressed a wish that he would communicate his sentiments to the public by writing, To this Luther objected, saying, that by so doing he should make all his doctrine doubtful." *Life of Luther*, prefixed to his *Commentary on Galatians*. Printed for Baxter, 1807.

Another very remarkable thing about him is the account which he gives of a night vision which occurred to him some time after he had commenced the Reformation. His account is as follows: "It happened once that I was suddenly awaked in the middle of the night; upon which Satan began the following kind of disputation with me. Hear, said he, O Luther, most learned doctor, are you aware that for fifteen years you have been celebrating private masses almost every day? But what if these private masses happen to be horrible idolatry? To which I replied, I am anointed a priest, and did all these things in obedience to my superiors, as you know. This, said he, is very true: but Turks and Heathens do everything in their temples from obedience. In this strait I attempted to repel the devil by the same arms that I had used against him under the papacy;

but Satan, on the other hand urged me the more vehemently, and said: Come, tell me *where it is written* that an impious man can consecrate.....Therefore, you have not consecrated." Luth. Opera. De unct. et miss. priv. tome vii. fol. 228, 229; from the edition of Luther's Works printed in 1558 at Wittenberg under the inspection of Melancthon. Milner observes upon this: "This celebrated conference of Luther with the devil has strangely embarrassed some of his followers. Joannes Regius, in his Apology for the Confession of Augsburg, is divided in opinion as to whether the spirit in question was good or bad; and attempts to defend the honour of his master on both suppositions. The famous Chillingworth supposes that the intention of Satan in arguing against the mass was to induce his antagonists to persevere in saying it. See his Religion of Protestants. This, however, is not doing justice to the skill and sagacity of the tempter." Letters to a Preb. 157. How wonderful that men are content to have such a man for their professed teacher! Lastly, Goldsmith, in his History of England, attributes the origin of Luther's movements to a jealousy which he felt at other monasteries being preferred above his own.

Milner gives also the following extracts from the works of Protestant writers. Bucer says: "The greater part of the people seem only to have embraced the Gospel in order to shake off

the yoke of discipline, and the obligation of fasting, penance, &c., which lay upon them in the time of popery, and to live at their pleasure, enjoying their lust and lawless appetites at their content. They therefore lent a willing ear to the doctrine that we are justified by faith alone, and not by good works, having no relish for them." Bucer de Regn. Christi, l. i. c. 4.

In addition to the above quotation from Erasmus, he gives the two following: "Those whom I once knew to have been chaste, sincere, and without fraud, I found after they had embraced this sect to be licentious in their conversation, neglectful of prayer, passionate, vain, as spiteful as serpents, and lost to the feelings of human nature. I speak from experience." *Erasm. ad Frat. Infer. Germ.* And, "What an evangelical generation is this! Nothing was ever more licentious and more seditious—nothing is less evangelical than these pretended gospellers." *Ep. i. 6, 4.*

Burnett gives the following account of the morality of England under Edward VI. "The sins of England did at that time call down heavy judgments on the land. They are sadly expressed in a discourse that Ridley wrote soon after, under the title of the 'Lamentation of England.' He says that, lechery, oppression, pride, covetousness, and a hatred and scorn of all religion, were generally spread amongst all people, but chiefly among those of the higher

ranks." Hist. of Reformation, part ii. p. 226. See also Strype's Memorials, book ii. ch. 23, and Camden's Annals, &c., which Milner refers to.

Calvin writes : " Of so many thousands seemingly eager in embracing the Gospel, how few have since amended their lives ! Nay, to what else does the greater part pretend, except by shaking off the yoke of superstition, to launch out more freely into every kind of wickedness ? " Calvin, lib. vi. de Scandalo. Erasmus says : " Take notice of this evangelical people, and show me one individual amongst them all, who, from being a drunkard has become sober, from being a libertine has become chaste. I, on the other hand, can show you many who have become worse by the change." Erasm. Spong. advers. Hutter. " I am sure," says Henry VIII. " that charity was never so faint among you, and virtue and godliness was never less used, nor God Himself amongst Christians was never less revered, honoured, or served." Stow's Annals, 1546. These, and many others which might be quoted, all go to prove the same point ; and they are remarkable as coming from those who were engaged in promoting the Reformation. The words of Erasmus, in particular, are remarkable, and are well worthy of consideration. They are of universal application, at the present day as well as then. It may safely be said, that no person who has ever

quitted the Roman communion, *has become more pious in consequence, or ever quitted it with any such intention.* They have invariably adopted a more easy and self-indulgent kind of religion than what they before followed. They have, to say the very least, got rid of the practice of confession; and thus thrown up something which is in itself painful, while it is a very great check upon sin. They have mostly given up the practice of fasting; clergy who have apostatised have almost always married; in some way or other the strictness of any one who had the least pretensions to it before his apostasy, has deteriorated. It is well worthy of the most thoughtful attention, that those who quit the Roman Catholic communion are *never* those who are touched with a sorrow for their sins, and wish to lead a *stricter life*, but those who are tired of strictness of life. A Catholic penitent becomes on repentance by far more firmly attached to his Church than he was before; when he feels compunction for the past, and wishes to lead a more holy life, he sees in the Church to which he belongs everything which is to be had on earth to promote that end. The probability is that he will meet with a skilful and sympathising spiritual director, to whom he can go and make an humble confession of his sins; and will return from him feeling as if he had disgorged the foul and poisonous matter which oppressed him. He will feel the con-

fessional a wholesome check upon future sin ; and, if he is in a condition to do it, he has the opportunity of entering some religious order, where, free from the cares of the world, and as far as may be from its temptations, he will seek, in the fellowship of those like-minded with himself, that comfort and strength which is to be derived from their example, and by the union of their prayers. He will, in fact, find every opportunity for the life of sanctity which he desires. It is those who are *tired* of these things, and of the Catholic mode of life, that head reformations of Catholic doctrine—the Luthers, the Ronges, the Henrys ; and it is those who sympathise with them that are led away by them.

It is unquestionable that holiness of life predisposes men for the reception of truth ; makes them discern and accept it more readily, while it also tends strongly to fortify them against being deceived ; the elect *cannot* be deceived. The very surest way then to guard against being deceived, is to endeavour to lead a stricter life. Let a person who is in doubt whether to follow the Catholic principle or some other, and cannot make up his mind, endeavour to decide the question by adopting an increased strictness. If he advances in real goodness, it is utterly impossible but that he will also advance towards the truth. This at all events is a safe and profitable way for *any* one to proceed upon. Let a person devote a short time in each day,

after the day is over, or any other more convenient time, to the examination of his conscience; to the consideration of the failings, be they great or small, which he has committed in the last twenty-four hours; let him thus endeavour carefully to ascertain what his failings are, whether they are an indulgence in resentful or impure thoughts, or little acts of dishonesty, or whatever else may be his especial temptation; and as he succeeds in rooting out his besetting sin, so will he be making a certain advance to the truth. Let him determine to be more charitable, more self-denying, less wedded to the world and less dependant upon its comforts, less fearful of losing his property or position in society; and as he becomes so, let him then see how he feels with regard to the Catholic Church.

However erroneous may have been the system in which a person may have been brought up, yet if he makes the best use of such portions of truth as it contains, and endeavours to grow and improve, he will at all events have a strong tendency and be in the *way* towards a full acknowledgment of the truth; while, on the other hand, when any one has been brought up in the full light of the truth, but does not act according to his profession, he has a strong tendency towards renouncing true doctrines; this has ever been the case in the Catholic Church. An age where laxity of practice has prevailed, has almost always given birth to some great

heresy or schism ; heresies and schisms are but the natural vent by which persons of uncatholic practise are drained off from the Church. The Reformation was unquestionably preceded by very great corruptions ; corruptions, however, not of doctrine but of manners, and this was succeeded, as if by a sort of natural consequence, by a denial of those truths which had ceased to have their proper practical influence upon those who professed them ; thus when obedience came to be practically neglected, the denial of its necessity for justification arose. All persons must in some way admit the truth of what is so generally said, that great corruptions prevailed just before the Reformation. Catholics as well as Protestants acknowledge it ; it was as much the object of the Council of Trent as of any Protestant bodies, to effect a Reformation of the various abuses which existed. The Council of Trent confirmed the *doctrines* that were taught previously to it, but reproved the negligence of the multitude of those who professed them. Such was the Catholic Reformation of the sixteenth century ; it was a reformation of *morals*, not of doctrine ; an endeavour to bring about a greater agreement between the two than was commonly to be seen ; not indeed that any evil practise then existed which received the sanction of the good, or was really believed to be good even by those who indulged in it ; it was a “ stirring up of their minds by way of remem-

brance," a devising of means for inducing people to act according to what they acknowledged to be right. It was not the correcting of any popular error either as to what is good or as to what is true ; but it continually happens that people do wrong against their better judgment. The council then did not correct any popular erroneous judgment, but endeavoured to bring men's belief and practice into harmony and consistency.

Far different was the Protestant Reformation ; it was exactly the reverse in every point. It complained of *too much* strictness of living ; the fasts, the confessional, the celibacy of the clergy were painful, and were abolished ; as Protestant writers themselves allow, a greater laxity of practice was introduced by it, indeed their efforts were not in any way directed to the introduction of an increased strictness, but quite the reverse ; they reformed not morals but doctrines. Thus they introduced a state which professed to be one of greater orthodoxy but less strictness ; totally mistaking the character of the Reformation needed ; which was one of practice, not doctrine, such as that which the Council of Trent did its best to effect. To exhibit a proper pattern of the Christian life, is, as every one allows, quite as important an office of the Catholic Church as to teach dogmatic truths. And thus that part of the Church which existed in England, after it had ceased to fulfil this main

function of the Church, fell from the trunk like a rotten branch, leaving but very few members as a sort of remnant that has escaped.

And thus, though a re-union between the Established and the Catholic Church is sometimes looked upon as if it would be the remedy for all the existing evils of the country, can hardly be so in reality; unless, indeed, it were accompanied by a different way of living to that which is now prevalent; for as Protestant writers confess, the state of practice since the Reformation is worse than it was before; so that if a sudden re-union were to take place before any reformation of manners is brought about, we should be even worse off than we were before the Reformation, *worse off than we were in the times when it pleased God to "remove our candlestick out of its place."*

This is a thing which needs always to be borne in mind, and especially in the present unsettled times. We are living in an age when every thing is in a state of progress. Never has the human intellect been more busy than it is now; religion, as well as all arts and sciences, is occupying deeply the minds of able men, and seems everywhere to be undergoing a very remarkable course of development: parties are in rapid motion, especially among Protestant communities, and that with unexampled rapidity; persons seem suddenly to find themselves in some strange position, which a little while ago

would have seemed quite incredible: we may recollect the time when we joined in abuse of the Catholic Church, but yet having been gradually in motion, find ourselves unexpectedly at its very gates, and feel ourselves irresistibly urged onward by a voice that seems to say, “*introite portas ejus in confessione, confess and enter the gates before you.*” And again, how invariably did Anglicans, one and all, for a long time sympathize with foreign Protestants, as if notwithstanding minor differences, they acknowledged a community of principle; but yet as the real nature of Protestantism has developed itself, and its awfully rapid tendencies to atheism have been manifested, those who once called themselves by its name have become startled and alarmed at their position, and, as Mr. Newman says, have become like those whom we read of in stories of diablerie, who, after having journeyed on quietly with their companions for a long time, have been suddenly struck with unspeakable horror at finding that there have been in their company more than they knew of.

Others again, on the other hand, are equally startled at seeing the strong reaction that has lately taken place, whereby so many seem moving in the direction of the Roman Catholic Church. They are astonished at the unexpected developments they behold, and set themselves in motion also, only in an opposite direction; they think that the Reformation did not go far enough; that

Protestants are not sufficiently Protestant; that they need some more accurate definition and limitation of principle to ensure safety against return to Catholicism. Men begin to feel that much as has been said about the principles of the Reformation, after all that has been written about them for three hundred years, that after all, that it is extremely uncertain what they are, or perhaps even whether it *has* any; whether in fact it was any thing more than one of those innumerable occasions in which men acted by passion in opposition to better feelings. At all events, even to its greatest admirers, there appears to be something very dubious about it; they are not satisfied with it; they feel it to be incomplete; some thinking that its doctrines went too far, others that they did not go far enough, and even those who think that it settled the truth finally and for all eternity, yet feel that it has this mark about it, (and it is a most ominous one,) that it is incomplete in being only a reformation of doctrine, but not of manners. And this is what surely any one at all inclined to piety will feel. I would even then, strange as it may seem, call upon the admirers of the Reformation to complete what they feel to be wanting in it. Let them begin especially by endeavouring with God's grace to ascertain in what point of Christian excellence their lives are wanting, and reform it; for surely to do God's will as far as we know it, is the way to have it made clearer to

us when perplexity arises, and will be the strongest safeguard we can have against being carried away by any of those evil currents which are now hurrying on every thing with such rapidity; as also it is the best means of predisposing us to receive the truth when it is presented to us; for in proportion as we are in that state of mind, &c. in which, according to our advantages, God would have us to be, so will be our readiness in receiving any thing that he proposes to us. He who does his best to be converted and to become as a little child, will be the best disposed for receiving the kingdom of heaven as such. May He who became a little child for our sakes, and chose babes and sucklings to give Him praise, and selected them to be His first Martyrs, also turn our hearts to be His true disciples. He is indeed at this moment doing a great work for the earth, and seems as if about greatly to enlarge the limits of His kingdom, may it take deep root in all hearts which it enters.

CHAPTER X.

COMPARISON OF THE ROMAN AND ANGLICAN CLAIMS, AND
OF THE DUTY WHICH RESULTS.

THE foregoing considerations may tend greatly to simplify the question of the relative positions

of the Catholic and the Established Church. If there were no account extant of the circumstances under which the separation took place, if each of them professed to have inherited from time immemorial, a system which differs from the rival system in its present points of difference; for instance, suppose that Anglicans maintained that they *never had* been in subjection to the Pope, and never had invoked saints, &c., but professed to have received from time immemorial, a system which did not contain these doctrines or practices; while the Catholic communion, on the other hand, professes to have received her whole system of doctrines from time immemorial, and to hold nothing but what the ancients held, and in no way to differ from them except in holding in a more explicit manner, and teaching in a more definite and precise phraseology, what they, partly from want of a settled scientific language to convey their ideas in, and partly from doctrines being less definite in consequence of having never been dicussed, held in a less definite form, though they still held it implicitly; while, on the other hand, we are as unconscious of having rejected any parts of, as we are of having added to, the traditionary system. If this was the state of the case between the two parties, the question would be much more complicated and difficult of solution than it really is. It would have to be solved, if it needed

solving at all, by an entirely different method to what it does under existing circumstances. A great number of considerations would have to be taken into account, which now are superfluous. There would be literally no way of deciding which party agreed with antiquity, or which had departed from the other, but by private judgment upon ancient records. But now, as matters are, we need go through no such process; it is quite enough to listen to the existing voice of the two communions. What we find the one of them asserting, and the other at the same time not denying, surely, in common prudence, we are bound to listen to that which *asserts* what the other does not deny; and thus we shall, at all events, be clear of the sin of unbelief; we shall be disbelieving neither one party nor the other.

Let us look then to their own respective admissions and claims. It is allowed on all hands that the existing difference is but of 300 years date; it is not an *immemorial* difference. The Anglican Church was, by its own confession, once part and parcel of the Roman communion. Before the Reformation, the doctrines of Papal supremacy, Transubstantiation, and others, were taught in all English churches; this is allowed on *all* hands; we need not look back to past history to prove it, the existing tradition of both parties admits or maintains it. It is the Anglicans who have departed from it; they indeed

charge us with having departed from the doctrines of antiquity; yet this is what is questioned. It is admitted on all hands, that *one* departure from the traditional system has been made, and that by the Anglicans at the Reformation. By their own confession, then, they have not been faithful in handing on the whole and entire system which was delivered to them; they confess to having, as it were, dissected it and rejected part of it; *how much* they have rejected is altogether a different question; hardly any two of them reject the same quantity; there are among them every variety of rejectors; from those who reject our Lord's divinity, to those who reject nothing but allegiance to His representative on earth, while they, perhaps, admit all other Roman doctrines. Thus, their own confessions will save an Anglican the trouble of searching into written documents, to account for the existing differences between the two communions, or in any way judging between them by external tests; their own voices and their own claims are quite enough.

And, again, if the claims of authority which the two make, were the same, Anglicans might have a reason for remaining where they are, which now they have not. The Roman communion, as is well known, claims to be under the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, which the Saviour promised and gave to the Church on the day of Pentecost, in order to

guide the Church "into all truth." And hence, the Church claims *authority*; demands to be listened to, and says that he who hears it not, disobeys not man but God. And that being under the guidance of that Spirit which from its office of guiding men into all truth, that is, teaching infallibly all that is necessary to be known, is emphatically called the "Spirit of Truth." (John xv. 26.) It cannot mislead men, otherwise it would not be under the influence of the "Spirit of Truth," but of a spirit of error.

Very different, [however, is the claim which the Anglican Establishment makes. It certainly does claim authority for *the Church*; by which it means, I suppose, the whole Catholic Church; of which it probably considers itself not to be the whole but a part; it claims authority then for the Church, though it disobeys it, in that it says that the Church has authority in controversies of faith. Yet where does it say that the *Church of England* has authority in matters of faith? Where is it said that a doctrine is to be believed or rejected simply because the Church of England says so? It no where says so in any of its published formularies, and the vast majority of its members will say that they would as little receive the doctrine of the Church of England as of any other body, if it appeared to them to be contrary to the words of Scripture. They do not maintain that because

the Church of England *says* it is Scriptural, therefore it *must* be so. The only claim that it can or does make upon the obedience of its members, is that it ought to be listened to as being a skilful interpreter of Scripture, or antiquity. It makes no pretension of having kept all that was ever delivered to it, and most of its members seem to think it by no means certain that it will continue to hold much longer even what it holds now. It rejected what it has rejected because it was the *opinion* of its reformers that such parts were not part of ancient teaching; and if part of the system they inherited was rejected because it was the *opinion* of the Reformers that it was wrong, the part which is retained was only retained because it was their *opinion* that it was right.

It claims for itself no special exemption from error, into which it may fall just as it says the churches of Jerusalem, &c., did. (See the Thirty-nine Articles.) It does not make any claim of infallibility, or even of indefectibility, that is, of continuing certainly to hold all necessary truths. Anglicans may claim this for the Church universal, but who ever heard of its being claimed for their own establishment? They all feel that as England, (so they say,) erred once, there is no certainty that it will not again; and, indeed, all its members seem to be in an unusual state of alarm for fear it should depart from the faith, though others will tell

them that they have done so already. It professes to have no gift of indefectibility; no guarantee that the Holy Spirit either will or has directed its councils. It says that general councils being composed of men who are not all of them ruled by the Holy Spirit, may err; therefore there may be error in its own councils, either future or past. What have they then more than skill in interpretation, to preserve them from error? What guarantee can they have, or profess to have, that they are not in error at this present moment? They can but say, it is the opinion of our learned divines that we agree with antiquity. Even those who claim most for the Established Church, seem not to like to claim authority for it. An eminent clergyman of the Established Church, in a note upon this paper, spoke of "*our* authority" being "*the ancient Church*;" that is, I suppose, the extant writings of it as interpreted by private judgment.

Another learned clergyman, however, of the same communion, who saw this paper when it was first written, says, "The English Church rests upon the Tradition of the West, less than the Tridentine points which are in controversy." This is a most strange assertion. If the English Church "rests upon the Tradition of the West," how is it that it does not accept it? The "Tridentine points" were, as all acknowledge, *part* of the existing Tradition of the

West at that time ; and if they “ are in controversy,” how can it be said that the English Church rests upon the Tradition of the West, when it made selections out of that Tradition? No. What Anglicans rest upon, or conceive that they rest upon, is *the test* which they used in discriminating between the various parts of the Tradition of the West ; or rather, what they rest upon is private interpretation, either their own, or that of others, of this assumed test. How little are Anglicans agreed as to what it is that they really do rest upon, even those who have a more consistent and definite theory than is usually held among them ! One of them saying, “ our authority is the early Church,” another, that what the English Church rests upon, is “ the Tradition of the West, less the Tridentine points.” The Established Church, however, did not *rest* upon it, but rather, so to speak, took it up in its hands, and examined and criticised it, keeping part and rejecting part. The very expression that he used, contradicts itself. To *rest* upon Tradition, is *to receive it as you find it*, not to receive it “ less” certain parts of it. To act in this way is to rest upon private interpretation.

Therefore, in quitting the Anglican communion for the Catholic, we are not renouncing one authority to follow another, but putting ourselves under an authority, having previously been under none at all. I say having previously been under

none at all, because it is evident that though a person in the Anglican communion were to hold all Roman doctrine, if such a thing were possible, which it is not, inasmuch as *one* Roman doctrine teaches the necessity of communion with the See of Rome, he would not hold what he holds upon the authority of Rome, but only by way of opinion. Because, of course, to submit to the authority of a body, is to submit to the guidance of those whom it has authorised to guide us. Now what Anglican submits to those whom the Roman Communion authorises as guides? None: in that among other things they do not make confession to them as is required. The Roman Catholic communion considers a person, even if he calls himself a member of it, to have abandoned all connection with it if he has been more than a year without going to make his confession to one of its priests.

Anglicans cannot in any way be said to submit to the authority of the Roman communion, until they submit to those whom it authorises to guide them; until they listen to her as she speaks through her missionaries, and invites all without distinction and without examination of their position, to join themselves to her. This is the line she invariably follows; she addresses herself to all whosoever they may be; the sole enquiry which she ever makes before addressing any one is, do they belong to our communion? all other enquiry it considers as superfluous. If

they are a separate communion, whatever be the circumstances of the separation, they are to be called upon to join themselves with her.

Thus, then, strange as it may seem, we shall, by following the authority of the Church of Rome, be thereby clearing ourselves of undutifulness to either communion. If the Anglican Church claims no authority for *herself* in controversies of faith, it is no undutifulness on the part of any who have been brought up in it, to listen to those who *do* claim it, which circumstance may remove a difficulty which Anglicans might otherwise feel about leaving the communion in which they have hitherto lived.

If it were not that the Roman Church calls to members of all other bodies to join them, there would be much less reason for any one to quit the communion of those whom he has been in the habit of worshipping with, than there is now; and especially, perhaps, if the religious body he has belonged to is the national establishment of his country. A national religion, even if it is an imperfect one, like that of the Established Church, ought never to be rashly despised by those who have been brought up in it; I mean, there does not seem to be any sufficient reason for quitting it short of a *call* to do so, and such calls, as far as we know, have been invariably made *through man*; sometimes indeed accompanied by miracles, but more commonly without them. Thus it was that the world was originally

brought into the Church, (as far at least as it was brought at all,) it was by the missionaries of the Church; had these not spoken, there would, perhaps, have been no necessity for any one to join it. There might have been many advantages in belonging to that society, yet notwithstanding this, there would not have been that necessity for men to quit their former fellow-worshippers, did not some voice call upon them to make the change. *After* the missionaries, however, had invited men to enter, any one who held back would do so at his own peril. On the other hand, in times of old, the religion of the Jews, though one of divine appointment, was one which only Jews were called upon to follow; those who were without were for the most part *allowed* to enter the fold, but were not commanded, and hence remaining without was no sin. So might it be in the case of the Church at present, if it "had not spoken" to men by its missionaries, they "had not had sin" in neglecting to join themselves to it.

I have heard it said that young or uneducated persons are wrong in moving from the communion they have been brought up in to join the Catholic, because, setting aside the question of which is right and which is wrong, it is impossible for *them* to be judges by reason of their want of learning. This, however, seems to arise from a misapprehension of the state of the question between us. If the question as to

whether they ought to move turned upon the interpretation of passages in Scripture or the Fathers, of course young or uneducated persons would be but insufficient judges; and thus such a person, who had been brought up in a communion that was in error, would have no means of setting himself right, he would be in a more unfavourable position for finding the truth than any one else: yet, surely, our Lord says that these are the very persons whose position is the most favourable for it. The state of little children, as well as of the poor and unlearned, is spoken of by Him as being the best for the reception of the kingdom of God. If, however, a person had to go through any lengthened process of private judgment, or, as the Anglican clergyman, whose words I have before quoted, says, “A like process must be gone through to determine the notes of the Church;” then, surely, the case would be hopeless for those, for whom, in truth, it is most favourable. If a Roman and an Anglican missionary were to preach simultaneously to a heathen, and the Anglican were, according to this clergyman’s plan, to tell the poor heathen that he must search antiquity to determine the notes of the Church, *then*, surely, the missionary’s work is but vain. The heathen need but look to their own words and their own claims to enable him to decide which party it was the safest for him to attach himself to. He would, at all events,

hear the Anglican say, that it was not indispensable to join *his* communion, and that all he could hold out might be had elsewhere. So that, by the missionary's own confession, it would not be indispensable to join *his* party. Thus, the very claims that the two parties make would make it evident which of the two ought to be followed—at least, granting that *one* of them should be followed, their own claims will make it clear which that one is.

It would seem to be from inattention to the difference between faith and opinions, that people would say that for a young person to become a Roman Catholic necessarily implied precipitation, and that they are incapable of judging correctly. It is quite true that to form correct opinions upon abstruse controverted matters is a task which few are equal to. It might, indeed, take a long course of study to form opinions; but, then, there is no occasion to form opinions at all; we may have something much higher, we may have faith. It needs no long course of study to receive faith, for it should be well observed, faith is the gift of God, and may be given to young as well as to old, to the unlearned as well as the most learned. Opinions on the other hand are the formation of the human intellect; and ordinarily, to form them correctly, there should be learning and experience; but in adopting the true faith, it is rather a willing

mind that is necessary, than much learning or experience.

Faith, according to Catholics, is a gift of God, and is therefore independent of a person's capacity for judging of arguments. The Almighty giver of it may bestow it upon whomsoever it shall seem good to Him, and to whomsoever He pleases; He may give it to a person who has scarcely common sense, while some even of the most learned may remain without it. He may give it to those whom He foresees will after a time fall away from it, and again to others who have done nothing to deserve it, and indeed to whomsoever it is given, it is a proof, not of our piety, but of God's mercy; may His gifts and calling be without repentance, may He perfect in us the good work that He has begun. He is now at this present moment offering the gift of faith to England in a manner which has not been for many years. He is dealing with England as with Cornelius of old, to whom He sent not only Peter as an outward instructor, but also an inward vision which prompted Him to send for Peter and to listen to him. So also at the present day He has been pleased in a remarkable manner to stir the minds of English Protestants. It has often been remarked, that the religious movement going on among them is quite an internal one; that is, it has not been excited by the sensible influence of other Christian bodies. It is to them what the vision was

to Cornelius. It is a directing both their eyes and hearts, not indeed to Peter but to his successor, and is awakening in their minds a sympathy and a desire for reunion with the Catholic communion, which has never before been felt since the time of the unhappy separation; may they not let the vision pass by unheeded, but go and join him who "will tell" them what they "ought to do."

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION — SUGGESTION DERIVED FROM THE INFLUENCE WHICH INVISIBLE BEINGS HAVE UPON THE MOVEMENTS THAT TAKE PLACE ON EARTH.

THE thoughts of the present religious movement which is going on so generally, brings with it a consideration, which I will not conclude without mentioning, in the hopes that it may be of service in healing the unhappy divisions which at present distract the world. There is, as all are aware, a very great and general movement going on, not in this or that particular school or locality, but over all the world, and in all the principal divisions of false or imperfect religions as well as the true one. One peculiarity of this movement is, the strong tendency towards the

Catholic Church which is observed to pervade everywhere ; not but what in each sect there is also a contrary current, for each sect seems breaking into two main divisions—one moving further away from the Church, and the other moving towards it ; certain it is that there is a general expectation of the Church shortly receiving great re-inforcements, and that not only of some one sect, but from all quarters. It is also very remarkable that this tendency towards the Church does not seem to have originated *from* the Church ; that is, it does not seem to be owing to any particular labours or activity on the part of the Church or her missionaries that men seem to be moved towards her. The present movement in the Anglican Church, for instance, is not at all traceable to any visible active interference on the part of the Catholic Church, nor is the corresponding movement in Protestant Germany, nor that among the Jews, nor that among the Mahometans ; it seems to originate from some other quarter. This perhaps is one of the most remarkable features of our own times. Formerly, nations were converted by the immediate preaching of the Church. It was the Church which stirred them ; the voice of her missionaries sounding in their ears, was what in former ages led nations to join her communion. Now, however, it is different ; the movement towards her is mostly owing to some *unseen* agency ; something has been going on

in the regions above more than we know of. There has been a movement of the powers above, and we see it in its results upon the earth.

Surely this may remind us of what is said of the latter days in the book of Revelations. It is very observable how very prominent a part is there given to the *ministration of angels*. The latter ages of the world seem to be spoken of as times when angelic influence is remarkably energetic, when created spirits, both good and bad, are unusually active.

In the *beginning* of the history of the Church, our Lord said to his apostles, "Go *ye* and preach the Gospel," and by the exertions of them and their successors for several centuries, the nations were converted. But in describing the *last* days, the seer of the Revelations says, "I saw an *angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel* to preach to them that are in the earth." So that, in addition to His ordinary messengers, it pleases our Lord to use as it were extraordinary methods for the conversion of the earth. Surely it seems now as if an angel had come down and "troubled the waters," which waters are the "people," and were directing men to the Catholic Church.

Shortly after this vision, followed that of another angel, proclaiming the overthrow of the great antichristian power; then another, exhorting men to fear God; then another, proclaiming

that the time of harvest was at hand; and lastly, another appeared, thrusting in the sickle and reaping. Throughout the whole book of Revelations, it seems to be spoken of as belonging to the latter times, that there shall be an unusual ministration of angels. Who these blessed angels are, we know not. Indeed, the term is used in different significations in different places. In the early part of the book, *the angels of the seven Churches* are spoken of, by which it is commonly supposed that the Bishops of them are meant. It does not necessarily then mean *beings not human*, such as we might commonly understand by the word angel. The angel who is spoken of as flying in the midst of heaven;—this, however, cannot mean a man on earth: it must either be one who is “equal to the angels,” and is “as the angels,” or it may be simply an angel in the common sense of the term. When these angels are spoken of, we cannot always tell whether it is one of the spirits of the just made perfect, or some other spirit. All we know for certain from the Revelations is, that *two*, at least, of those whose ministry is to be conspicuous in the latter days, are glorified saints. I speak of the “two witnesses.” These are described as standing before the throne of God; and as coming upon earth and testifying for three years and a half, and then sealing their testimony with their death, and being raised again after three days. These two are as yet

in heaven; and it is quite plain that they are real *men*; or they could not be killed. They are generally taken to be Enoch and Elijah, who have been taken up into heaven, but not exempted from the common debt of nature, which is only put off for a time, but remains to be paid; and that in the last days they will be sent for the conversion of the world, as if conversion was to be carried on by direct means from heaven. These two, then, at least, are glorified saints; may not others besides them be charged with an important office with regard to their brethren who are yet in the flesh?

I mention these things to show that not only do saints and angels so far take an interest in the things of the earth as to rejoice in the conversion of a "sinner that repenteth," but also that there is reason for thinking that they are actively engaged in *bringing* men to repentance. That departed saints exercised a very important office in the guidance and instruction of their brethren who are yet on earth. Nay, more than this, we know that they have an office even in respect to angels themselves. "Know ye not," says St. Paul, "that we shall judge angels?" And again he speaks of the principalities and powers in heavenly places, being made to understand certain things *by the Church*. So that even angels themselves receive some of the knowledge which they have by means of the Church; that part of it, it would seem, which

has become "as the angels" and is with them in heaven.

There is also, besides these beings that have been already mentioned, *another* spoken of, surpassing them all in brilliance and glory. "A great wonder appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and crowned with twelve stars." Who is this that so far excels all others, that whereas it is said of other saints that they shall shine as the stars, of *her* it is said that the stars are but her crown, the moon her footstool, and the sun her garment? Quæ est istu quæ progreditur sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut Luna, electa ut sol, terribilis ut castrorum aries ordinata?" It is she who brought forth the man-child that was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Rev. xii. It is the Queen, of whom a prophetic vision was vouchsafed to David, and which he describes in the 45th Psalm; the Queen, who stood at the right hand of the King, clothed in wrought gold. Astitit regina a dextris tuis in vestita deaurato circumdata varietate; the Queen whom he foretold that all the nobles of the earth should deprecate, and as it were, say to her, "Illos misericorder tuos oculos ad nos converte." "Vultum tuum omnes deprecabuntur divites plebis," whom men should be mindful of for ever, and confess to all eternity. Memores erunt nominis tui in omni generatione

et generatione. Propterea populi confitebuntur tibi in æternum et in sæculum sæculi.*

There is reason for believing most firmly that this blessed and most highly favoured being who was chosen above all her sex as the channel through which the "Life" should come into the world, is at this present moment, in some remarkable manner, the channel through which the "Truth" even now is brought home to men; as if the present great movement that is going on, were in a great measure her work. She is the angel that is giving light to the earth. She whose garment is the sun, cannot but shed light. Every thing in the present movement seems to speak of her. Purity, humility, religious contemplation, are spoken of in the Holy Scriptures as being her most remarkable graces. And it is just these that seem to be gaining

* The celebrated Hurter says, "My religious conviction was already wounded at seeing the fraction of Protestants to which I belonged, banish altogether the worship of the Blessed Virgin, whether because it held no recollection of her existence, or whether she was considered only as an ordinary Mother, and simply a pious woman. From my early years, without having sought, without having instructed myself by reading, without having entered upon any discussion, without acquiring any particular knowledge of Catholic teaching on the subject of the Mother of God, already I felt myself penetrated with an irresistible veneration for her. I perceived in her the Christian's advocate, and from the bottom of my heart I addressed myself to her in the intimacy of my private life." [From his own "exposé des motifs," quoted by the Tablet, April 5, 1845.] This is a most remarkable description of the feelings of a Protestant—feelings that seem to have come to him, not through external human influence, but as it were through some unseen inspiration.

ground so rapidly. What attention is being paid to the necessity of purity of heart! greater purity is visible every where, even upon the outward surface of things; in the style of architecture, art, painting, dress. There seems to be a purer taste altogether. So with humility and contemplation. The present movement seems more remarkable for these things, which above all other Christian graces, are so conspicuous in her, (if it be not irreverent to speak of one grace shining more conspicuously than another in her in whom is all grace. *In te est omnis gratia, virgo singularis.*)

Though missionary zeal and other graces are on the increase, they are not so eminently the characteristics of the present movement, as are some other things. The great desire of truth, for instance, that has begun to prevail. Men are now beginning to be dissatisfied with mere opinions, and to look for something better—for real and true faith. The Catholic Church has ever looked upon the extinction of error in close connection with the influence of the blessed Virgin. I will avoid particular mention of *facts* that have occurred, and which prove the truth of what I have said, from a fear that they would cause scoffing. My hope and my sincere wish is, to promote in any way that I may be able, the praise and reverence of the blessed Virgin; and sorry should I be to say any thing that might cause any one to blaspheme, though

happily she might be beyond the reach of hearing the impure and blasphemous speech. All such speeches as these may, for what we know, be kept away from her hearing, just as we know that pious invocations are conveyed to her. The Almighty surrounds the earth in all directions; in Him we live and move, and have our being; He is, if I might venture to say so without irreverence, as it were a living Atmosphere. And just as when we speak a word into the ordinary atmosphere that surrounds us, the air conveys the sound of it to a person at a distance; so will the omnipresence of the Almighty like an atmosphere, convey even to the uttermost parts of the earth, if need be, the addresses which we make to His saints.

In former times the chief efforts of the Church were directed towards those nations who had never been God's people; what is remarkable, however, in the present state of affairs is, that there is so strong a movement among those who have been "*broken off*." All these have entertained a long hereditary prejudice against the Church—a prejudice which no efforts on the part of the Church have been able to overcome. There is therefore an additional difficulty in the case of these, over and above what exists among heathens, and therefore commonly the conversion of a heretic is a work of much more time than that of a heathen. The Church then being thus situated, and having become like Cassan-

dria of old, always speaking the truth, yet not believed except by her own members; it seems part of the gracious plans of the Almighty to use at the present juncture extraordinary means for the conversion of those who are in their present position not entirely through their own fault. It seems as if it were His plan in the last days, to make use of those *who in olden times* have fought the good fight and kept the faith, in order to bring about a reconciliation between the contending parties now on earth.

May it not then be the duty of all parties to turn their eyes to those who have gone before in the faith? Part of the prophetic office of Elijah, when he comes, will be to turn the *hearts of the children to the parents*. Men's hearts are now being turned to antiquity; as is remarkably seen in the Anglican movement. It seems to have been deeply felt among the new school of Anglicans, that the ancient saints are to be the means of bringing about a reconciliation between themselves and the Church; though it may not have been seen by them from the first in *what manner* the saints would effect this reconciliation, in that they thought it would be by a mutual appeal to their writings by all parties, and by a mutual readjustment of doctrines: in fact, by the private judgment of able individuals on both sides as to their contents. Even in this supposition there is much truth, though not the whole truth. The writings of the

Fathers have undoubtedly furnished Anglicans, as they do Catholics, with many ideas which may be of the greatest service. Still, this is not all: reading their writings is not the *only* possible means of holding communion with them, and if, as all seem to be agreed, or nearly so, that it is those who have lived before the separation that are to be the means of bringing about a reconciliation, it is obvious that we ought to hold all the intercourse with them that we possibly can. Now, if an Anglican was desirous of converting a Jew to the belief of our Lord's divinity, he would surely think it a great gain if he could persuade the Jew, who very likely, as many of them do, would acknowledge our Lord to be at all events a saint, to invoke His assistance, which, of course, it would be wrong to persuade him to, if the invocation of saints were necessarily wrong. It never could be right for a person who thought all invocation of saints wrong, to persuade a person to invoke one whom *he thought* to be only a saint: for the sin would be on his part as great in this case as if the person he invoked were really nothing more than a human saint.

There is a kind of universal tendency in human nature to show subordinate honour of this kind to glorified created beings; and Protestants themselves, in a great number of instances, would sanction it—in almost any, it would seem, but a Catholic. The Greek Church uses

invocations to the saints, so do Russians ; German Protestants, too, are beginning to call upon the blessed Virgin ; so are even Mahometans. Surely, we want more at their hands than is to be gained merely from their “ remains.” We have been long in possession of these—we have long had the writings of the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Fathers ; yet they do not draw the disunited bodies together, nor even do they seem to have a tendency to do so. We need their *active* co-operation ; we must have all the communion with them that we can. If we only consult their writings, we shall lose the benefit of some of the very greatest of the saints : for that “blessed” one, whose intercession is, I may say, irresistible, wrote nothing at all. We must *invoke* them.

And lest there should still exist among Protestants any suspicion that to do so would be any sort of infringement of the mediatorial office of Christ, whom we and they acknowledge to be the one Mediator between God and man, I would observe, that I am not calling upon them to ask the saints to mediate between God and man, but between *man* and man, between party and party. Surely, the Scripture nowhere says that the saints may not be mediators between *one man and another* ; nor, indeed, does it, as we hold, exclude *all* kind of mediation even between God and man, but only that kind which it belongs to our Lord alone to perform. Such

mediation as can be effected by means of *prayer only*, it is lawful and right for every one to undertake ; *every friend of God*, be he here or in heaven, is quite at liberty to ask for a blessing upon any one whom he has an inclination to ; and in so doing is not usurping any office that belongs to another ; and what they may do without our asking, there is no harm in asking them to do.*

Upon these grounds then, among others, I would earnestly recommend any Protestant, who has any feeling of the evils that arise from the disunited state of the world, and has any desire for unity among those who call themselves by the name of Christ, to hold communion with those who are gone before, with a view to bringing about present differences. To have fellowship with those whom we know to have fellowship with Christ, is what surely any one who has any deep desire for fellowship with Him, will endeavour to do. Why cannot each party turn to those whom it acknowledges to be right, to help

* The subject of the difference between the honour which may be shown to God and that which may be shown to a Saint, is treated in a most luminous manner in the tenth book of the treatise, *De civitate Dei*, by St. Augustine, who seems to have been engaged in much the same sort of controversy upon this matter, that Catholics of the present day are with Protestants. The Manicheans reproached the Catholics of their day with the invocation of saints, just as protestants do now. The passage of St. Augustine is well worth reading, therefore I will give a translation of it by way of appendix, and also a form of invocation such as is proper to be used.

to bring about a reconciliation? Let any two bodies of men agree in appealing to those who lived before the separation took place, to bring the erring party back to the truth, and surely divisions will have a tendency to heal. It seems to be a growing feeling that those who have lived in times before division took place, have, as one especial part of their office, the charge of reconciling those who differ. Anglicans have, for some time, looked to those who lived before the division of the East and West; and now, more especially, is attention being directed to the saints whom our own island produced before division took place in it. And, again, it is generally thought that the especial mission of Elijah in the last days will be the conversion of his own countrymen: his office may now be to intercede for them. Enoch may have a like office for those who have never been part of God's special people. Mahometans are beginning to call upon our Lady, whom they acknowledge to be one of two blessed women. May my countrymen not be behind in the like pious action! I am sure they have but once to try it, and they will never again doubt of the profit of calling upon the blessed Virgin. Will they provoke the Lord Jesus to jealousy by so doing? God forbid. What man is there in the world that is jealous of honour shown to his own mother, especially when it is shown for his sake?* I

* It seems quite impossible to conceive that there can be such a

speak, then, to all who have not an invincible notion that it is wrong to address the ever-blessed Virgin, and say, Do but make trial of it—make trial but once; and observe the sentence that your conscience passes upon the deed. If it accuses you, which it will not, you can but leave it off. And if any one thinks that even if it were a sin, God would not forgive it when it was done from a sincere desire to serve Him, and in compliance with the usage of so many holy men, who have been in the eyes of all the world so eminent for their piety towards God—if, I say, the example of these men were to move any one to make trial of the practice, and any one thinks that God would not show him mercy, that man knows not God.

Can it be possible that those men who have been the most unearthly in their lives, the most devoted to God, the most ardent in their love to their Redeemer, could be mistaken in a very first principle of Christianity? Oh, no; such an idea is too revolting to be entertained. Surely, surely, when we consider the lives of such men as St. Bernard; if they have devoted their lives to God as they have, and engaged in

divorce between truth and beauty, as there would be if such exquisitely beautiful hymns as the "Salve Regina," or the "Stabat Mater," did in reality contain in them any thing contrary to truth. Any Protestant who has heard the music which has been set as an accompaniment to the "Stabat Mater," may form some idea of the hymn itself, for the concurrence between the words and the music is quite wonderful.

works of charity to their neighbour, and risen to prayer so early for so many ages, and still have been suffered to be in a mistake, where can be the efficacy of prayer at all? Surely, to say that invocation of God's saints is wrong, is to say that prayer to God Himself is useless.

If there is any one into whose hands this may fall, who, in consequence of anything he may see in any of the books I have recommended, or who, by having recourse to the blessed Virgin, obtains a gift from above, or who feels that I may have been, though ever so remotely, in any way accessory to his finding any heavenly blessing, I beseech such a one to remember me, and to pray that what has been given to himself, the Author of all good gifts may bestow the same upon me also.

Mitissime Domine Jesu, qui pendens in cruce nos omnes in discipulo tuo Joanne dulcissimæ Matri tuæ commendasti, ut in ipsâ refugium, solatium, et spem inveniremus; respice propitius super dilectam Patriam, tanto orbatam patrocínio; ut hujus sanctissimæ Virginis tandem recognoscens dignitatem, illam omni devotionis affectu colat et veneretur, Reginam profiteatur et Matrem. Sonet ipsius suave nomen in ore parvulorum, seniorum ac morientium inhæreat labiis, invocetur ab afflictis, celebretur a gaudentibus: ut, hâc maris Stellâ auspice et duce, ad æternæ salutis portum omnes pervenire mereantur. Qui vivis et regnas in secula seculorum. Amen.

APPENDIX.

See note, page 183.

IN considering the difference between the honour due to created beings and that due to God only, St. Augustine begins by suggesting the well-known distinction which has since obtained between *λατρεία* and *δουλεία*, the former of which is due to God only, the latter to created beings also. (See *de civitate Dei*. Lib. 10. ch. 1.) The only question is, "what is the essential difference between the two?" that is, what idea do those who draw the distinction mean to convey by the word *latria*, and what by *dulia*? This enquiry is necessary, because protestants, for the most part, do not understand the difference. That both words indicate some kind of honour, is plain;—but *what* kind of honour? not simply the making of supplication, for though we make *supplication* to God, so do we continually to our fellow human beings; so that *this* cannot be the distinguishing mark. Again, we *bow* to Him, so we do to our superiors among men; we *obey* Him, so do servants their masters; nay, one man is often even in *slavery* to another. What stronger term can we use to express the subjection we are under to the Divine Being? Yet doubtless there is some important and evident distinguishing mark in the homage due to God only, something which to offer to another would be a direct infringement of the divine prerogatives, just as the coining of money with any other person's head upon it than the reigning sovereign's is accounted treason.

It is evident that SACRIFICE is the peculiar act of adoration which is the distinguishing mark of the worship of God, and in which the homage due to Him differs from that shown to any created being. The offering of sacrifice is the special acknowledgment of divinity. And hence there is really nothing to be surprised at, that in those communities in which the "daily sacrifice" has been "taken away," and which seem not to be conscious of the existence of a true and proper sacrifice being offered any where, it is not to be wondered at that they should be incapable of distinguishing between the honour which Catholics show to the Holy Trinity, and that which they show to the Blessed Virgin and the saints. St. Augustine says, "To pass over other things which belong to the worship with which God is honoured, certainly there is no one who would dare to say that sacrifice is to be offered to any but to God. Men have made use of many things which belong to divine worship in showing honour to men, whether from an excessive humility, or from flattery—but who ever thought that he ought to offer sacrifice except to one whom he knew or supposed or pretended to be God?" *De civitate Dei*, Lib. 10. c. 4.

THE HAIL MARY EXPOUNDED.

SECTION I.

Hail, Mary! full of Grace, the Lord is with thee.

WHAT is the Hail Mary? A. It is a salutation and holy prayer, whereby we beg the intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary; and express our joy for the incarnation of the Son of God. Q. How many parts has it? A. Three: First, the salutation of the angel Gabriel to the blessed Virgin, when he announced to her the incarnation of the Son of God, saying, *Hail, Mary! full of Grace, our Lord is with thee.* Secondly, that of St. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, when the blessed Virgin came to visit her: *Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* The third part was added by the Church against the heretic Nestorius and his party, who denied the Virgin Mary to be the mother of God: *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our death.*

INSTRUCTION.—The most excellent prayer, next to the Lord's Prayer, is the Angelical Salutation, commonly called the *Hail Mary*, because it begins with these words, *Hail Mary! full of grace.* As the Lord's Prayer was delivered by Christ himself, to teach us how we ought to pray, through his mediation, to his eternal Father; so the *Hail Mary* was taught by divine inspiration, to beg the intercession of the blessed Virgin to her son Jesus, for us sinners; and to express our joy for the incarnation of the Son of God, which was the cause of all our good.

This prayer, though short, is full of mysteries: it puts us in mind of our ancient misery, deprived as we were,

through sin, of the sight, the grace, and the love of God. It excites us to gratitude for the benefit of the incarnation. It honours God, by renewing the memory of so great a mercy. In a word, this prayer is odious to the devil, as it shows how his wicked design was frustrated, and his head crushed by the seed of the woman.

The first part in the salutation of the blessed Virgin by the angel Gabriel, in which her singular graces are expressed: *Hail, Mary! full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*—*Hail* is a word of salutation, as if he had said, *Rejoice, O Mary, Mother of God!* What a word of joy then must this be to her, and all heaven and earth, as it renews the memory of her Son's conception. *Full of grace*: these words mean that the blessed Virgin had a special prerogative of grace above all other creatures, as being elected by God to conceive and bear Him in her womb, who is the author of all grace to mankind. No wonder then, if her conception and nativity, and her whole life, were immaculate, and never subject to the stain of sin; or that she, who was to be the mother of our blessed Redeemer, who came to destroy sin, should be, by his grace, preserved from all sin: and although it is written of others, that they were *full of grace*, as the Apostles and St. Stephen, to the end of fulfilling the office whereto they were chosen; yet none was so *full* as she, who was chosen to be the *Mother of our Lord*. Her graces were singular, such as made her the most pure of all other pure creatures, whether upon earth or in heaven. *Our Lord is with thee*: the Son of God, who is Lord of all, the second person of the blessed Trinity, descends into thy womb, to become incarnate, to take flesh of thee, and to be thy Son. He descends to be in thee, not only by love and grace, but by nature also, to be at the same time *spiritually* conceived in thy soul, and *really* in

thy body. Thus we may truly say, that God wrought in her the greatest of all his wonders, when he made her mother of God, she still remaining a virgin.

EXHORTATION.—Bear, O Christian soul, a due regard to this Angelical Salutation, and to the blessed person who is therein honoured by God, men, and angels. As often as you repeat it, think with joy on the Incarnation of the Son of God. Think on your own ancient misery and present happiness. You were once slaves of the devil, but now are sons of God: once children of wrath, children of hell, now heirs with Christ in glory. O blessed prayer, deserving of veneration in the heart of every Christian! Live so, that, like the blessed Virgin, you may partake of God's singular favours. Follow the steps of your blessed Mother; imitate her virtue, purity, humility, obedience, and devotion; and, through the practice of these virtues, you will assuredly preserve the presence of God in your heart.

SECTION II.

Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

WHOSE words are these? A. The words of St. Elizabeth, when the blessed Virgin entered her house, soon after the conception of the Son of God. Q. What does *Blessed art thou among women* mean? A. That as she was chosen to be the mother of God, she therefore ought to be blessed and praised above all other women. Q. What means, *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb*? A. That Jesus is her true Son, and that as in him, and by him, she is the instrument of all blessings to us, so, therefore, she ought to be blessed both by men and angels.

INSTRUCTION.—The words, *Blessed art thou among women*, were first pronounced by the angel Gabriel, and

afterwards by St. Elizabeth; for when the blessed Virgin came to visit her, she was filled with the Holy Ghost, and then made this exclamation, *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb*: and as soon as the salutation of the blessed Virgin sounded in the ears of Elizabeth, the infant in her womb, St. John Baptist, leaped for joy; as if these great blessings which entered her house with the blessed Virgin, at the sound of her voice, were pledges of the extraordinary graces and favours God intended to confer on us hereafter, by the voice of her intercession. *Blessed among women*; that is, blessed above all other women that ever were, or shall be. Blessed above all pure creatures, either upon earth or in heaven, as bearing the Son of God, then incarnate, in her womb. Blessed in her person, as full of grace. Blessed with regard to JESUS, the fruit of her womb, the fountain of blessings to us, to whom we owe our life and happiness, there being no other name through which we can expect to please God, or ever to enjoy him. As then the first curse was laid on us through the disobedience of Eve, so it was taken off, and all blessings conferred on us through Mary, by the fruit of her womb Jesus, by whom she herself was blessed and made the instrumental cause of all blessings to us, and thus the honour we give to the Mother always centres in the Son.

EXHORTATION.—With what veneration ought you not then, O Christian, to look on this blessed Virgin, now reigning with her Son in glory, after all the blessings that have, through her, proceeded to you and all mankind? O repeat these words with the same spirit as the angel and Elizabeth, praising with them the great power of God, and extolling his blessed Mother, the most holy of all pure creatures, so highly honoured by himself. Bless and

praise her amidst the corruption of this age of libertinism and infidelity, verifying those words she, by divine inspiration, spoke of herself: *From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.*—Luke i. 48.

SECTION III.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death.

By whom was the latter part of this holy prayer composed? A. By the Catholic Church, against Nestorius and his followers, who denied the blessed Virgin Mary to be the *Mother of God*, and would have her called only *Mother of Christ*, pretending that the person of Christ was different from the person of the Son of God. Q. How is she the Mother of God? A. Because her Son Jesus, who was truly born of her, being no other person than the Son of God, is truly God. Q. What mean these words, *Pray for us sinners*? A. That as such, we stand in need of her intercession to her Son Jesus. Q. Why is added, *Now, and at the hour of our death*? A. That as we are every hour in danger, so we have need every hour of her powerful protection, but chiefly in our last moments, that she would defend us against our enemy, and be our advocate at judgment. Q. Why do Catholics say the Hail Mary after the Lord's Prayer? A. That by the blessed Virgin joining her intercession to our petitions, we may the more easily obtain what we ask for in the Lord's Prayer. Q. May we likewise desire the prayers of other saints? A. Yes, of all the saints, but in particular of the saint whose name we bear, and of our angel-guardian.

INSTRUCTION.—This last part of the Angelical Salutation is very ancient, and has been used by all the faithful ever since the Council of Ephesus had decreed, according to

scripture and tradition, against Nestorius, that the Virgin Mary is truly *Mother of God* : for since there are not two persons in Christ, but one, the divine and human nature both subsisting in Jesus, the second person of the blessed Trinity, who is truly her Son, and the Son of God ; so the same person that is God, is also Man ; and it therefore clearly follows, that she is truly the *Mother of God* : *Mother of our Lord*, said St. Elizabeth.—Luke i. 43. *The Holy One which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God*, said the angel.—Luke i. 35.

Yet we do not honour her with divine worship, which is due to God alone, but only with such honour as is due to the most pure creature, as she certainly is. We also look upon her as our most powerful patroness, and never-failing advocate with Christ, and place great confidence in her intercession, as well with regard to her great dignity and title of Mother of God, as with respect to her excellency, extraordinary sanctity, and merit with God, being full of grace, and now seated in glory above all the angels and saints. Neither can we doubt, if she has had so great interest and power with her Son on earth, but she now has the same and greater with him in heaven. We, therefore, beg that she would pray for us now ; that is, every hour, because being every hour in danger, we have every hour need of her aid ; but chiefly in our last moments, to defend us, and to be to us a mother, both dying, and at the tribunal of divine judgment.

Upon the same grounds we implore the intercession of all the saints : for knowing that their prayers always prevailed with God, during their abode amongst us in this vale of misery, we believe they are not less, but more prevalent, now, that their souls are in glory ; nor that they have less regard and zeal for our salvation, as being all

members of the same church with us, though in a different state. If the wicked spirits hear the supplications of their wretched votaries, how can we doubt that the blessed know our wants, and the object of our petitions. They enjoy a clear sight of God, who knows all things; and as they beg mercy for sinners who repent, so we read in the gospel that they rejoice at our conversion. But as God sends his angels to guard and protect us from the many evils of soul and body to which we are daily exposed, and the name of some saint is given us in baptism; so it is a pious custom, for every one to invoke their particular angel-guardian, and the saint from whence they derive their name, and in so doing we honour God, who appoints the saints and angels for our protectors.

EXHORTATION.—Make then, O Christian, your Saviour's Mother your powerful advocate with her Son, by often repeating this Angelical Prayer. Honour her thereby, as your pious ancestors ever did before you. Let your prayers be equally fervent as your necessities require, and as her intercession is powerful with her Son: by invoking her, you in effect pray to him; while your petitions are by her presented to him; for whilst your eyes are on her, your heart is fixed on God. Often repeat this prayer when you are in health, against the time when, through pain and agony, you may not be able: *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.* A prayer so excellent cannot be too often repeated; learn then to say the Rosary, which is composed of the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, and endeavour to obtain the indulgences which are granted to those who undertake that devotion. You have been taught to have a singular love and veneration for the blessed Virgin Mary from your infancy; honour her then through the whole course of your

life; every year, on her festivals; every month, with those of the Rosary; every week, on all Saturdays; and every day, by frequently repeating the *Hail Mary*. Never forget, morning and evening, to recommend yourself to the protection of the saint of your name, and of your angel guardian; let this be your daily prayer: *O Angel of God (or blessed Saint,) to whose holy care I am committed, enlighten, defend, and guide me this day, (or this night,) from all sin and danger: O remain with me now, and at the hour of my death.* To God be all praise and glory, from all the saints on earth and in heaven. *Amen.*

